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## The Art of Lebanese Verbal Dueling: The Battle of Beit Mery and Beyond

The Art of Lebanese Verbal Dueling: The Battle of Beit Mery and Beyond

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies

by

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the living and vibrant oral tradition of verbal dueling in Lebanon, also known as Lebanese *zajal*. The introductory chapter explores the historical, sociolinguistic, and musical-metrical roots of today's Lebanese *zajal* contests and festivals, which feature teams of up to four poets who compete against each other in improvised, sung verse in colloquial Lebanese, carrying a sort of dialogue within which they argue opposing sides of universal themes and topics of current social interest. Though time, tradition, and culture in the Lebanese mountainside have nurtured the development of sung oral poetry into its current form and status as a national pastime, very little has been written about it in English. In the second and third chapters, the dissertation takes an inside-out approach to making the art of Lebanese *zajal* accessible to an English-speaking audience via a close-up view of a celebrated verbal duel that took place in 1971 at the mountain resort village of Beit Mery, Lebanon, before an audience of 40,000 enthusiasts. Following a description of the setting, the individual performers, and previous rivalries building tension before this contest, a bout-by-bout written record is laid out with running commentary and explanatory notes. Each exchange is transcribed from a taped recording obtained in Lebanon and is followed by transliterations, literal translations, and poetic translations. In the fourth and final chapter, the dissertation provides an analysis of the oral-formulaic composition strategies used by the poets and the effectiveness and interplay of prosodic and semantic features of the poetry. The final chapter also comments on current trends in the *zajal* tradition in Lebanon and what effects recent developments might have on its future. In addition, a side-by-side Arabic-English poetic translation and a glossary of terms are appended along with the audio recording.

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Most of all, I wish to thank and acknowledge my husband, colleague, and teacher, Adnan Haydar, without whom my research simply would not have been possible.

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this dissertation to my husband Adnan, my children Nadia and Kikko, my parents, and to all Lebanese *zajal* poets, past, present, and future.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

“*Zajal* is to Lebanon as the Pyramids are to Egypt, the Louvre to France, and the Taj Mahal to India”

--Said Aql

Poetry has always been the most highly regarded form of artistic expression in Arab culture. The Arabic language itself, with its system of tri-literal roots and derived morphological patterns, almost seems to have developed for the primary purpose of producing rhymes and prosodic meters – a poetry machine invented by a poetic mind. In his introduction to the January-May, 1989 issue of *Oral Tradition*, which focuses on Arabic Oral Traditions, Issa Boullata aptly describes the way in which Arabic-speaking peoples throughout the ages have reveled in listening to poetry:

Arab audiences have been noted for their strong inclination to rejoice in listening to the cadences and rhythms of their language as it is used to express ideas or emotions with which they identify. They would be thrilled at the apt use of a word or an image and would respond with unrehearsed, uninhibited collective acclaim as the inevitable word or image is eventually used by the poet, particularly in a rhyming position, with unexpected ramifications of meaning. (2)

Lebanese people are no different from other Arabs in their extraordinary love of Arabic, except possibly in regard to their constant attempts to recreate and simplify the classical idiom and bring it closer to everyday life. In Lebanon, a deep and long-lived oral tradition continues to thrive to this day. In particular, the art of verbal dueling, which is composed and performed in the Lebanese dialect, is so popular in Lebanon that it has attained the status of “a national pastime” (Haydar, “The Development of Lebanese *Zajal*” 189). Audiences numbering in the thousands regularly attend matches between rivaling *jawqas* (bands or teams) of poet-singers.

They flock to these duels to watch and hear their favorite *zajal*<sup>1</sup> virtuosos argue through the exchange of improvised and sung lines of poetry.

Much of the thrill that Lebanese audiences experience undoubtedly stems from the poets' use of the Lebanese dialect and their references to current and historic events, topics, and heroes that are significant to Lebanese culture and heritage, as well as their treatment of universal human themes that connect the Lebanese to the larger global community. Moreover, the popularity of Lebanese *zajal* is not limited to Lebanon; *jawqas* regularly travel to Lebanese immigrant communities around the globe to satisfy the thirst of their expatriate brothers and sisters living abroad in a perpetual state of nostalgic longing. Indeed, one night at a “*Ḥaflit Zajal*” (*Zajal* Party or Performance) can provide a hungry Lebanese émigré with more sustenance than a whole year's worth of eating *tabbouleh* and *kibbeh* and drinking *arak*. In J.L. Austin's terms, the act of verbal dueling is “performative” and entails the “illocutionary force” of enacting in words the very meaning of Lebanese identity<sup>2</sup>. The popularity of Lebanese *zajal* is also not limited to attendance at live *zajal* events. There is an abundance of audio and video recordings available to enthusiasts, some made by professional recording studios and sold as cassettes, CDs, and DVDs in stores and market places, and plenty others recorded by individuals and shared for free on the internet and elsewhere. There are popular weekly TV shows dedicated to Lebanese *zajal* aired in Lebanon and online, and since as far back as the 1930's, dozens and dozens of print Arabic-language magazines and journals dedicated to recording and publicizing

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<sup>1</sup> The term *zajal* refers to oral vernacular poetry in general, of which verbal dueling is a sub-type. In this study, I refer to the poet-singers of Lebanese verbal dueling as *zajal* poets.

<sup>2</sup> The reference is to terms used by J.L. Austin throughout *How to Do Things with Words*.

the verses of *zajal* poets have been in circulation and have enjoyed wide reading audiences in Lebanon and in Lebanese immigrant communities around the world<sup>3</sup>.

My aim in this study of the living and vibrant oral tradition of Lebanese verbal dueling is two-fold: first, to describe its present-day form and historic development, and second, to explore, analyze, and interpret the inner workings of the oral composition process and the strategies employed by *zajal* poets through the lens of translation. Towards this second aim, the dissertation takes an inside-out approach to making the art of Lebanese *zajal* accessible to an English-speaking audience via a close-up view of a celebrated verbal duel that took place in 1971 at the mountain resort village of Beit Mery, Lebanon, before an audience of more than 30,000 enthusiasts.

### **1.1. Lebanese *Zajal*: Background and Historical Development**

Though time, tradition, and culture in the Lebanese mountainside have nurtured the development of sung oral poetry into its current form and status as a national pastime, very little has been written about it in English. This is not surprising when one considers the oral and vernacular nature of the tradition on the one hand, and on the other, the immense challenges that arise when attempting to translate for an audience unfamiliar with the language. Indeed, the language barrier applies not only to westerners and other non-Arabic speakers, but even to some extent to native speakers of Arabic from nations outside Lebanon. This is due to the highly-nuanced and culturally- and linguistically-specific nature of individual poem-performances. Furthermore, translating poetry necessitates translating more than just words. It requires

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<sup>3</sup> For a comprehensive listing and description of *zajal* in print media, see the chapter entitled “Al-Ṣaḥāfa al-Zajaliyya: Min 1933 ila 2000” (“Zajal in the Press: From 1933 to 2000”) in Robert Khoury’s *Al-Zajal al-Lubnānī: Manābir wa A’lām*.

translating the culture and the tradition as well, in order to explain to an unfamiliar audience *why* thousands of Lebanese *zajal* enthusiasts would flock to an arena to watch middle-aged poets duke it out under the stars with nothing but their voices, wit, and poetic images as weaponry.

Another major reason for the dearth of scholarly studies about Lebanese *zajal* stems from the historic neglect of and overall disdain for all types of vernacular Arabic folk literature in general. Just as the *Thousand and One Nights* - that great monument of narrative folklore passed down orally across cultures and centuries through the *ḥakawāti* storytelling tradition - was looked down upon by the literary elite and considered too vulgar for inclusion in the literary canon, so has colloquial oral poetry been overlooked as unworthy of scholarly attention<sup>4</sup>. But this does not negate the fact that throughout its history, Arabic poetry has been composed and recited in dialect and has been practiced and developed to high levels of sophistication by numerous great poets who were also great *Fuṣṣḥā* poets. Nor does it deter from the fact that colloquial poetry is and has always been received, enjoyed and admired by a widely appreciative listening audience.

### **1.1.1. Arabic Roots**

Our knowledge of the origins and early development of Arabic poetry is limited and scholarship on the topic usually begins with a discussion of the pre-Islamic masterpieces known as the *Muʿallaqāt* or the “Suspended Odes.” Though little is known for certain about these poems, including whether or not they were so named for having been written on fine Egyptian linen in gold lettering and hung from the *Kaʿba* in Mecca, it is clear from those early examples

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<sup>4</sup> It is worth noting here that only as recently as 2013 have Lebanese universities begun adding courses on Lebanese *zajal* into their Arabic literature curricula.



that by the time pre-Islamic poets such as Imru' al-Qays, Tarafa, Labid, ʿAntara and the others were composing their poems in the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD, Arabic poetry was already a highly developed and sophisticated art form. Most importantly, this art form was an oral one. Not only were pre-Islamic poems recited and transmitted orally, but as modern scholars such as Monroe and others have shown by applying the oral-formulaic theory set forth by Parry and Lord, these poems were composed orally by their “original” composers and show evidence of having been altered to some extent by their *rāwīs* (reciters) and compilers whose versions were eventually written down<sup>5</sup>.

In addition to the inherently poetic and musical nature of the Arabic language, competition was certainly another important factor in the development of Arabic poetry in early times. Arabs used to organize large gatherings in which traders from different tribes met to buy and sell products. These gatherings were also major social and cultural events that included poetry competitions among poets representing the various tribes. The most famous of these was known as *Sūq ʿUkāz* or “Ukaz Market” which took place along the spice route in the center of western Arabia. The winning poem, according to legend, would be written in golden letters and suspended from the *Kaʿba* in Mecca as a reward. Regardless of the validity of the practice of hanging the golden poems, one thing is for certain: the winning poem was received with great admiration by listeners who memorized, recited, and transmitted it into the furthest reaches of the Arabic-speaking world and as a result its composer (and his or her tribe) gained high respect and wide renown.

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<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Monroe’s “Oral Composition in Pre-Islamic Poetry: The Problem of Authenticity.”

In addition to the kind of poetry competition described above, the practice of poetic dueling among tribes and clans was also widespread and of great importance in pre-Islamic and early Islamic times and beyond. Audiences relished the sounds and ideas put forth by eloquent and strong-witted poets who used spoken words as weapons. As described in detail by Haydar, poets used a number of well-known genres as they declaimed their metrical and rhymed verses, including *fakhr*, or boasting about oneself or one's tribe; *madīh*, or praise, usually for the host or benefactor; *rithā'*, or elegiac poetry; and *hijā'*, a defamatory poem aimed against one's opponent ("Development of Lebanese *Zajal*" 209-210). Other competitive traditions included *al-mu<sup>ʿ</sup>āraḍa* (to oppose), made famous by Imru' al-Qays and ʿAlqama and which as a term describes a poem emulating the meter, rhyme, and aesthetic qualities of another poem. Poets engaged in *al-mufākhara*, which derives its names from *fakhr*, involving boasting, as does *al-munāfara*, another form of boast exchange that does not require judging by a third party. *Al-mufākhara* and *al-munāfara* were used among Arab tribes and also between Arabs and Persians. Another type of bragging, *al-mu<sup>ʿ</sup>āzama*, was exemplified by the female poet al-Khansā' in which one brags about his or her ability to bear grief, especially the death of a loved one. *Al-Murājaza* is another type of boasting using only the *rajaz* meter, from which it gets its name, and *al-munāqada* (to criticize) was widespread among Umayyad poets and made famous by the trio of poets Jarir, al-Akhtal, and al-Farazdaq. During the Umayyad caliphate, some poets indulged in a series of poetic jousts collected as *al-Naqā'id*. These contests principally involved Jarir, al-Akhtal and al-Farazdaq and others. These poets took the practice of lampooning to new levels, often launching attacks of a sexual nature against each other. (Like many parts of *A Thousand and One Nights*, the *Naqā'id* are generally not found in school books.) Other themes within the pre-Islamic

tradition, such as wine poems (*khamriyyāt*), hunt poems (*ṭardiyyāt*), and love poems (*ghazal*), emerged in later Islamic times as separate genres in their own right.

As far back as pre-Islamic times, Arab poets engaged in poetry competitions that involved verse that was composed and recited in dialect. It is also well-known that the Arabs in Andalus composed colloquial poetry and wrote many *diwans* of *zajal* poetry, the most notable poet being Ibn Quzman. Colloquial Arabic poetry also spread from early Arabia to other Arab countries, each of which had its own prominent *zajal* poets and its own particular tradition. Colloquial poetry was manifested in Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen (where it is known as *Zamil* poetry), Iraq, the Gulf region (where it is known as *Nabaṭī* poetry), Palestine, Jordan, and in Western Syria and Lebanon, where it was practiced, developed, and received with an especially high level of enthusiasm.

### **1.1.2. The Lebanese Tradition**

One reason for the special enthusiasm for *zajal* in the Lebanese context is that historically Lebanese *zajal* poets competed fervently with each other in the art of oral composition and they always performed their poems themselves, rather than writing them down for other singers to perform as was often the case in other Arab traditions. They composed and sang their *zajal* poetry in person at public celebrations and at evening gatherings, parties, and also at funerals. They engaged in boasting and satire and competed in verbal duels, to the point that no public occasion transpired without a *zajal* poet in attendance to entertain the guests and commemorate the event in poetry.

In his essential article entitled “The Development of Lebanese *Zajal*: Genre, Meter, and Verbal Duel,” Adnan Haydar describes the historical development of the verbal duel in Lebanon

(201-205). He tells us that the tradition of Lebanese *zajal* developed in the mountain villages of Lebanon where, in the evenings, folks gathered in each other's homes to socialize. Story-telling and singing were the most popular forms of entertainment, with the most exciting being that of the dueling poets who were often invited to perform at weddings and other celebrations. The best duelers were rewarded with money or presents. On saints' days, traveling poets would go from village to village, accompanied by their supporters (a chorus group), and seek out opponents to duel with. Local villagers would summon their best poet-singers and soon a crowd would develop. The audience would divide itself in support of one or the other dueler and the contest would begin. The older poet would start first by shaking the tambourine (*daff*) and asking the audience for permission. He would choose a topic of his choice, a riddle or a political or social issue, and challenge his opponent to respond in verse. His opponent would be required to respond using the same meter and same rhyme. If he was unable, he would have to apologize in verse or else lose the duel. Other requirements included that the poet not be allowed to plagiarize lines of other poets in the current or previous contests; the lines must be improvised. At the end of the duel, a judge who was an established *zajal* poet was chosen by the audience to evaluate the duelers and announce the winner.

In the early 1900s there were new developments in the *zajal* tradition. Poets (*zajjāls*) began to band together and form groups called "*jawqas*". These groups would travel around the countryside advertising their *jawqa* and would receive invitations to perform at social functions. They would begin by praising their hosts, and eventually take on a political or social topic or series of topics for debate and duel amongst themselves. Topics were most often oppositions, such as day and night, war and peace, freedom and imprisonment, and were often suggested by

the audience. A chorus (*riddādi*) would sit behind the team and wait for their cues to sing along and repeat “clincher” lines of each of the duelers.

The formation of *jawqas* helped set the Lebanese tradition apart from other Arab oral poetry traditions. It allowed them to take the practice of *zajal* poetry from an individual poet performing at local occasions to a much broader audience and purpose as teams of poets travelled from town to town dueling amongst themselves or against other teams, thus drumming up excitement and enthusiasm from the audience. Just as Arab poets in pre-Islamic times had their *rāwīs* who memorized and recited their poems, the *zajal* poets of each Lebanese village have their aficionados and supporters who encourage them, rally behind them, and memorize their poems whenever and wherever they compete. It is indeed this element of live competition before a demanding critical audience that has enabled the Lebanese tradition to develop into its current form and is what has not only made it popular, but kept it popular even in today’s ultramodern society with all of its technological advancements where it continues to compete successfully with other flashier and less mentally taxing forms of entertainment.

Another essential component of the development of Lebanese oral poetry is the role of music. As has already been mentioned, the modern tradition of oral poetry in Lebanon is commonly referred to as *zajal*, stemming from the verb *zajala*, meaning “to raise the voice in singing, produce a sweet, pleasing melody” (qtd. in Haydar 191). Beginning with its etymology we can easily see the importance of music to its essence. In a more general sense, *zajal* in the Lebanese context refers to oral vernacular poetry, of which there are numerous forms, composed in or for performance and declaimed or sung to the accompaniment of music. While Lebanese *zajal* is an Arabic tradition and shares some features of the genres of *zajal* and *muwashshah* (ode in classical Arabic in strophic form) that originated in Muslim Spain in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>

centuries, its development in modern times is probably less related to its roots in early Arabia than to its Syriac roots as set down by the early fathers of the Maronite church. The Maronite church was established centuries earlier by monastic followers of the 4<sup>th</sup> century Syriac monk St. Maron who took refuge from persecution in the mountain regions of Lebanon. The earliest forms of what has developed into the Lebanese *zajal* of modern times were based in writings of Maronite church fathers writing in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century. In their attempts to translate Syriac liturgical material into Arabic, they felt it was important to translate into the dialect of Lebanon at that time. As they did so, they retained some of the musical features of Syriac hymns and Syriac metrical features. At first, the *zajal* poems were a mixture of *fuṣḥā* and dialect but eventually changed to dialect only<sup>6</sup>. Eventually *zajal* came to be part of Lebanese folk culture practiced predominantly in the mountain regions as a cherished source of entertainment. Over time, the *zajal* tradition in Lebanon has developed into a rich, complex, highly entertaining grand-scale performance.

## 1.2. *Ḥaflit Zajal*: Format and Structure

Today's *zajal* contests, generally held in Lebanon during the summer months and abroad during other months of the year, are most often held in public arenas or in large restaurants or banquet halls. They attract hundreds and sometimes thousands of enthusiasts who willingly pay seventy-five to a hundred dollars or more for a ticket to attend a *ḥaflit zajal* (*zajal* party) where they can hear and watch their favorite *jawqa* (team or ensemble of two to four poets) compete amongst themselves or against other *jawqas* in four- to five-hour-long duels of sung, improvised

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<sup>6</sup> This can be seen in the early *zajal* poems quoted and discussed in Whaybeh's *Al-Zajal: tārīkhuhu, adabuhu, a' lāmuhu, qadīman wa ḥadīthan*. In particular, see the poems of Suleiman al-Ashluhi (1270-1335), Bishop Gibrail al-Qila'I (1440-1516), Reverend Issa al-Hazar (late 16<sup>th</sup> century) and others (131-151).

poetry. The teams of poets are accompanied by a chorus of singers called *riddādi* (repeaters) with *derbakkis* (drums), *daffs* (tambourines), and sometimes electric keyboards or other melody instruments such as *mizmār* and oud, who repeat refrains and help keep the poets in tune.

Audience members, who more often than not will also be enjoying dinner and drinks during the *ḥaflī*, also sing along and participate in the duel with clapping and whistling and shouting for poets to repeat their best lines. In fact, audience members often take advantage of their right to shout “*‘īd-a!*” meaning “repeat it!” This is a sign they enjoyed the verses so much that they want the poet to not only repeat the six to eight lines he just improvised, but he is required to add two more to the beginning. Certainly one can imagine the joy felt by the audience when treated to an enhanced repetition of a poetic coup and, because the audience members now know the lines, they are able to join in the fun by singing along. It is analogous to the thrill of watching an instant replay of some amazing athletic feat on the basketball court or the football field, and what is even better, perhaps, in the context of the verbal duel is that the audience can interact with the professionals seated in close proximity before them and participate in the action with their own voices.

At a typical *ḥaflit zajal* only one *jawqa* of poets will perform and duel each other according to a prescribed sequence. When two *jawqas* of poets compete against each other, it is a larger event and is called a “*Mubārāt Zajal*” (*Zajal Match*) or might be referred to as “*Taḥaddī*” (Dare or Challenge) or “*Taḥaddī Kbīr*” (Big Dare/Challenge).

*Zajal* parties follow a conventional format. In the case of a single *jawqa* performance, the four members of the *jawqa* sit on the stage before the audience, seated side by side in ranking order starting with the leader to the right, then the second-ranking poet, the third, and finally the fourth. In the case of a two-*jawqa* competition, the two lead poets will be seated beside each

other at the center of the stage with the two, three, and four poets of each *jawqa* seated in order to the right or left of the lead poets. Each poet has a tambourine which he will shake and raise over his head during his turn. Behind the poets are the *riddādi* who sit ready to sing refrains and shout encouraging comments while also providing musical accompaniment with *derbakkis* and tambourines as well. A brief musical prelude initiates the *ḥafli* before the lead poet delivers the opening odes segment, which is called the *iftitāḥiyyi*, an Arabic term meaning “overture” or “prelude.”<sup>7</sup> In the case of two opposing *jawqas* performing, the two *jawqa* leaders will deliver opening poems or *qaṣīds*, in which they normally praise their hosts and commemorate in poetry the particular location where the duel is being held. The opening *qaṣīds* often set the trajectory of the duels to follow by introducing key images, oppositions, and topics for debate. Towards the end of the *qaṣīd*, poets will set the niceties aside and get onto the real fun of taking a preliminary jab or two at their opponents.

The *iftitāḥiyyi* segment, which lasts from fifteen minutes to a half hour, is then followed by two lines of *qarrādi*, an upbeat strictly-rhythmed musical meter, which are improvised also by the lead poet, leading to a refrain that is repeated by the *riddādi* and that requires a response. Poet number two then responds to the lead poet’s refrain, using the same *qarrādi* rhyme scheme and meter, and the two poets go back and forth, taking turns debating in *qarrādi* verses. Then the two other poets join in, or the six others in the case of two *jawqas*, each taking turns giving verses and refrains of *qarrādi*.

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<sup>7</sup> For more about the *Ifitāḥiyyi* segment, the *qaṣīd* form, and other poetic, musical, and thematic features of the *Ifitāḥiyyi* segment, see Chapter Three, sections 3.1. and 3.1.1.



Next, the number two poet delivers a four (or more) line verse of *ma<sup>c</sup>annā*, another metrical-musical form of *zajal*<sup>8</sup>. This *ma<sup>c</sup>annā* verse ends with an attack or a question directed at the lead poet and provides the specific topic that the lead poet and second poet will debate, each taking an opposing side of the argument and trying to outdo the other with cleverness while undermining the other's arguments. Once a series of exchanges is set in motion, the two poets mirror the rhyme scheme, meter, and tune of the initiator of the exchange. While one poet is singing, his opponent is listening very carefully and preparing a response. Each turn consists of anywhere from 7 to 20 lines.

As each poet delivers his lines, he is working towards a key element in his turn -- his clincher. The clincher is the final lines of his turn, and yet these are the first lines he composes in his mind while he listens to his opponent sing; the clincher also determines the rhyme pattern for all of his preceding lines. When he reaches and sings the clincher, the tune stabilizes to a familiar tune, which is then picked up by the chorus (and the audience) and repeated twice. Thus, each poet's turn ends with a refrain that is repeated and sung twice by the *riddādi*. This exchange between the one and two poets is the first of the "verbal duel proper" segment of the *ḥaflī*. The duel between the first two poets will go on for several exchanges, lasting approximately twenty minutes or so, and is ended by closing stanzas in the *qaṣīd* form. Then the dueling moves to the other two poets who follow the same procedure as the lead and second poet, debating a new topic. Each poet takes an opposing side or point of view and each poet's turn ends with a refrain that is repeated and sung by the *riddādi*. The dueling goes back and forth and again is ended with closing *qaṣīds* by each of the two dueling poets that summarize and pursue their arguments, supporting them with references to life experiences, literature, politics, religion, history, folklore,

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<sup>8</sup> See Chapter Three, section 3.2.1. for a detailed description of *ma<sup>c</sup>annā*.

and current events, while constantly trying their best to connect with the audience and gain their support.

As mentioned earlier, throughout the verbal dueling the audience claps and sings and repeats the refrains along with the chorus and will often ask the poets to “repeat” by shouting “*‘īd-a!*” or “*‘īd-a w zīd-a!*” (i.e. repeat and add lines). If this request is made by someone in the crowd, the poet must deliver his lines again, word-for-word, plus add one or two new lines with the same rhyme and meter at the start (i.e. he must change the *maṭla*<sup>c</sup>, or proem).

When the verbal duel segment of the *zajal* party finally runs its course, it is common for the poets to take turns with *ghazal* or sung, improvised love poems (during which the poets inevitably take one more opportunity to boast about themselves or attack their opponents). These stanzas are initiated by the lead poet and introduce the required metrical form and end rhyme. The other poets then contribute verses of the same form and same rhyme introduced by the lead poet.

When the *ghazal* segment is over, the party begins to wind down and the lead poet (or each of the lead poets) closes the party with odes in *qaṣīd* form commemorating the occasion and thanking the hosts and sponsors and the audience. In his final lines, the lead poet almost always bids good-bye by expressing his desire to meet again soon, under the stars, at a future *zajal* party.

To keep the party lively and the audience engaged over the course of the several hours (usually beginning at ten o’clock at night) it takes for the *ḥaflit zajal* to unfold, poets incorporate a wide variety of musical and poetic meters that range from long forms like *ma<sup>c</sup>annā* filled with melisma and other ornamentation of the voice, to short, rhythmic forms like *qarrādi* with traditional tunes familiar to the audience. They incorporate a number of verbal tricks and engage

in well-known, traditional genres of sung poetry such as the homonym-based *‘atābā* and intricately rhymed and patterned *mkhammas mardūd*. The poets are well-versed in history and current events and often weave important historical or folkloric figures and events into their arguments, another way they are able to connect with the audience and establish their virtuosity.

In *zajal* parties nowadays, there is no declared winner. While individual poets certainly have their fan bases of supporters who will always declare their poet as the winner, in reality both sides win and the audience wins the biggest prize of all – an evening of pure enthrallment.

When two *jawqas* compete in the bigger “*Mubārāt*” events, the sequence of events follows a similar pattern. Rather than dueling amongst themselves, however, the lead poets of the opposing *jawqas* will duel each other, as will the number two poets, number three poets, and the number four poets. Since the lead poets are the most skilled and experienced pair, their duel is usually saved for last. Thus, the number four poets duel first, then the threes, the twos and finally the ones for a grand finale. This, of course results in a longer verbal duel segment and an opportunity for the poets and audience to engage in an even wider variety of topics and themes. In the late 1960’s and through the 1970’s, the “*Mubārāt Zajal*” was judged by a panel of judges and a winner was declared. However, ever since the legendary battle at Beit Mery in 1971 when the judges were so impressed by the quality of the performances of all the poets from both *jawqas* that they were reluctant to choose a winner, no official declaration of the winner has been made.

### **1.3. The Battle of Beit Mery: Setting**

What I have been referring to as “The Battle of Beit Mery” was a major once-in-a-generation type of cultural event that took place in the mountain resort village of Beit Mery, Lebanon on July 21, 1971. It is known to Lebanese by a few different names, including *Haflit*

Beit Mery or *Mahrajān* Beit Mery (Beit Mery Festival), or also as *Ḥaflit Dayr al-Qalʿa* or simply *Ḥaflit al-Qalʿa* owing to the specific venue of the event at the historic Dayr al-Qalʿa (literally Monastery of the Fortress) fortress in Beit Mery. The *zajal* duel at Beit Mery pitted the *jawqas* of Lebanon's two most prominent *zajal* poets and fiercest competitors – Zaghoul al-Damour and Mousa Zoghayb - against each other in a seven-hour battle attended by an estimated forty thousand fans. This well-known *zajal* battle was chosen for this study because of its major popularity among Lebanese all over the world who either had the great fortune of being among the forty thousand spectators estimated to have been in actual attendance, or who have memorized its exemplary lines, storing them away as valuable gems, having heard them quoted on the lips of their fellow countrymen and women for generations. In fact, The Battle of Beit Mery, a kind of Lebanese Woodstock, was just one of a number of high caliber *zajal* events of the 1970's to which *zajal* enthusiasts flocked by the tens of thousands. It serves as a fine example of the level of greatness achieved by the best rivaling poets of their day as well as the level of enthusiasm of their followers. I chose the Battle of Beit Mery as a focus of this study because it provides a perfect model, a gold standard of sorts, through which to present the vibrant living tradition of Lebanese *zajal* to the world outside Lebanon.

In his (Arabic language) articles about luminary *zajal* poet Zaghoul al-Damour and the Beit Mery duel, George El-Hage gives a personal account of the 1971 event in Beit Mery<sup>9</sup>. He begins by noting that Zaghoul and Mousa competed with their respective *jawqas* – *Jawqat*

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<sup>9</sup> The description quoted and paraphrased here is based on my own translation of sections from “*Al-Zajal al-Lubnānī wa Zaghoul al-Damour fī Beit Mery, Part One*” and “*Al-Zajal al-Lubnānī wa Zaghoul al-Damour fī Beit Mery, Part Two*” (“*Lebanese Zajal and Zaghoul al-Damour at Beit Mery, Part One and Part Two*”) by George Nicolas El-Hage, originally published in *Dahesh Voice*, Vol. 6, No. 1 and Vol. 6, No. 2 (The Daheshist Publishing Co., Ltd, New York, 2000) and available online at [GeorgeNicolasEl-Hage.com](http://GeorgeNicolasEl-Hage.com).

Zaghloul al-Damour (The *Jawqa* of Zaghloul al-Damour) and *Jawqat* Khalil Rukuz (The *Jawqa* of Khalil Rukuz<sup>10</sup>) – many times before and after Beit Mery, at Mishrif, Chtoura, al-Madīni al-Riyāḍiyyi (Sports City Complex), Mayrouba, al-Mtayn, and many other locations in and outside Lebanon; but the duel at Beit Mery remains the most well-received and most memorable over the course of time. In his words:

Everyone who listens to *zajal* and who attended the duel at Beit Mery (also known as *Ḥaflit Dayr al-Qalʿa* or *Ḥaflit al-Qalʿa*) or who has listened to the recording of it, or who called in to express their opinions on Sawt al-Arab radio show when it hosted Zaghloul, all critics of *zajal*, aficionados of *zajal*, and even the *zajal* poets who sang at Beit Mery themselves, including Mousa who attested to it, and Zaghloul, who stated that the numerous other contests that took place between himself and Mousa before and after Beit Mery “did not achieve the same resounding level of success and excitement” ...all share the opinion that what happened at Beit Mery was a one-of-a-kind event which, in Zaghloul’s words, “brought all of Lebanon together...and took place before the war...was attended by some 40,000 people...didn’t end until 5 o’clock in the morning, and even then the people didn’t want to go home...Despite the twenty or so other *zajal* parties that took place...*Ḥaflit* Beit Mery remains the most significant one.” (14-15)

El-Hage goes on say that “at Beit Mery, for one reason or another, the god of poetry descended upon the poets” (15) and that all eight poets – Zaghloul al-Damour, Zayn Sh<sup>c</sup>ayb, Tali<sup>c</sup> Hamdan, and Edouard Harb; Mousa Zoghayb, Anees al-Fghāli, Jiryis al-Bustany, and Butrus Deeb – gave the best performances of their lives, excelling at the top of their art. No one won or lost the contest; even the judging panel was awestruck by what they heard and witnessed. This decision by the judging committee not to officially declare a winner was another factor contributing to the mystique and lore of the Battle of Beit Mery. It only served to fire up the rivaling camps of

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<sup>10</sup> Mousa Zoghayb’s *jawqa* is named after the late great *zajal* poet Khalil Rukuz who was Mousa’s mentor and long-time *jawqa* leader and colleague prior to his death in 1962. After the Beit Mery duel, Mousa’s *jawqa* was renamed to *Jawqat al-Qalʿa* (*Jawqa* of the Fortress).

supporters for Zaghoul's or Mousa's *jawqa* as everyone had a strong opinion to express claiming victory for their heroes.

According to El-Hage, July 21, 1971 was “a day like no other in the history of Lebanese *zajal*...A day when “blades embraced blades” and “swords clashed against swords” – the blades of *zajal* and the swords of improvisation” (15). He reports having walked from his home in al-Mansourieh to Beit Mery (around 5.6 kilometers or 3.5 miles) because from about noontime that day the main road was closed due to the uninterrupted line of parked cars stretching from the outskirts of Mansourieh all the way to the entrance of the Beit Mery fortress where the duel was to take place. El-Hage also reports that the price of a ticket reached 150 Lebanese pounds based on his witnessing the (black market) sale of two tickets for 300 LL<sup>11</sup>. Approximately forty thousand people were in attendance, “many more standing than seated.”

The members of the judging panel were seated in the front row supervising the start of the party. They included: Ahmad Makki, Said Aql, George Jirdaq and Tawfiq al-Basha. All of the poets had arrived to Beit Mery except for Zaghoul. El-Hage describes the extraordinary beginning to this extraordinary event:

When it got to be 9:00 pm, the scheduled time for the party to begin, the crowd began to get impatient and began demanding for the party to begin and questioning the cause for the delay; suddenly a man was heard on loudspeaker saying that all the poets had arrived except for Zaghoul; everyone was aghast; “except for Zaghoul? Why? How could that be? Where was Zaghoul? Was he sick? Was he in an accident?” Rumors spread that the party was going to be canceled or postponed, which started an uproar. Soon enough we heard the voice of the same man on the loudspeaker (who might have been one of the organizers of the big event)

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<sup>11</sup>Roughly 55 USD in 1971; \$1.00 in 1971 had the same buying power as \$5.86 in 2014, making the 150 LL ticket in 1971 roughly equivalent to paying about \$300 today.

assuring everyone that Zaghoul was on his way and clarifying that the reason for his delay was due to the poet's brother having passed away the night before and informing everyone that Zaghoul was now undoubtedly in a deep state of mourning and grief. This was a huge blow; the poet had been with his family up until the end and had left the moment the funeral was over and only after eulogizing his brother with tear-jerking verses. Despite this tragedy, Zaghoul bid his brother final farewell only hours ago and was now making his way to be with us tonight as expected...

This news landed on us like a bomb; no one knew whether Zaghoul's arrival would make us happy or sad; we worried how he would be able to participate in the duel...

Around ten o'clock some noise and commotion rose up from the main entrance to the fortress and we heard people shouting, "Zaghoul is here! Zaghoul is here!" We looked and saw the poet being carried in on the shoulders of people in the crowd, he was exhausted and obviously grief-stricken as well as awestruck by the emotional reception from the crowd. A path was made for him to pass through the crowd on the shoulders of people and police officers; everyone was clapping and whistling and shouting; his entrance was extraordinary, the entrance of victorious conquerors.(3)

### 1.3.1. Zaghoul and Mousa

The significance of the Beit Mery duel is also tied to the personalities and excellence of the two lead poets, Zaghoul al-Damour and Mousa Zoghayb. Most Lebanese would agree with El-Hage when he says "an encounter between Zaghoul and Mousa is the peak of *zajal* encounters; both are extremely talented and both are masters of the *manbar* [stage] with fervent and numerous fans; verbal duels between them have their own special flavor and long-lasting reverberations" ("Part One" 15). *Zajal* poet Antoine Saadeh described to me in a personal interview on the topic of the Beit Mery duel how Zaghoul and Mousa actively encouraged their perceived rivalry by refusing to appear together in public and by fanning the fire with boastful statements about themselves and attacks on each other. Saadeh describes the level of loyalty among supporters of one or the other poet as being fervent and all-pervasive, to the point that "if

by way of conversation a Mousa fan discovered himself seated next to a Zaghloul fan, at a *haflit zajal* or anywhere else in public, say at a restaurant, theater event, or some other place, he would immediately get up and find another seat. Fans of Mousa or Zaghloul wouldn't "be caught dead" next to each other. Some details about these two *zajal* greats are included here, though the biographical information provided is by no means exhaustive.

#### **1.3.1.1. Zaghloul al-Damour**

Born Joseph al-Hashem in al-Bouchrieh, al-Metn, Lebanon in 1925, Zaghloul began improvising *zajal* at age 9. He spent most of his free time at school composing poetry rather than playing with other children, so much so that his teachers and classmates noticed this about him and referred to him as "that boy, the one from al-Damour, the "*mzaghlal*" one (little one; also etymologically related to *zaghloul*, baby bird)," which is how he got his nickname "Zaghloul al-Damour" (Songbird of al-Damour) at the young age of 9. Zaghloul grew up to become the *zajal* poet "in whom all the elements of creativity have been perfected...upon whom the creator bestowed the gifts of eloquence, cleverness, quick inspiration, presence of memory, and a silken voice...THE poet of all of Lebanon...the Prince of the *Manbar*" (El-Hage, "Part One" 8). In addition to his omnipresence at all special occasions in Lebanon, Zaghloul earned the nicknames "Sindbad of *Zajal*" and "Ambassador of Lebanon to the Emigrant Lands" for his numerous travels abroad, beginning in 1953, that took him to places in Africa and Europe, to Argentina, Australia, Canada, North American, South America, Mexico, Kuwait, Jordan, Syria, Egypt, UAE, Saudi Arabia, and others. Zaghloul laid the foundation for modern-day *zajal*, setting the rules for *zajal* parties and organizing *jawqas* and *zajal* events; he had a major impact on the development of Lebanese *zajal* during his generation. Dozens of great *zajal* poets learned under his wing as members of his *jawqa* and got their training from him. His proverbial



beautiful singing voice is considered the highest standard of excellence. In 1958 he founded the *zajal* magazine *Al-Masrah* (The Stage) which for twenty-five years was a favorite resource for *zajal* enthusiasts and poets. He has published books of his poetry and has received many honors and awards, most notably the Lebanese Medal of Honor in 1974. Although today Zaghoul's health keeps him out of the public eye, he continues to be held in the highest esteem among Lebanese and his name is synonymous with Lebanese *zajal*.

### **1.3.1.2. Mousa Zoghayb**

Mousa Zoghayb was born in Hrajl, Lebanon, in 1937 and began his *zajal* career at age 17. He is nicknamed “*al-Malik*” (the King). He sang alongside the great *zajal* poet Khalil Rukuz until Rukuz's death in 1962, after which he was the lead poet of *Jawqat* Khalil Rukuz. After the Battle of Beit Mery, the name of Mousa's *jawqa* was changed to *Jawqat al-Qal'a* (*Jawqa* of the Fortress (of Beit Mery)). Mousa Zoghayb is considered a leading authority of verbal dueling who chooses his opponents carefully, refusing to duel many. He is known for the depth and difficulty of his poetry, as if he is “chiseling in stone,” a style that sharply contrasts that of Zaghoul who seems to be “ladling from the sea” due to the fluidity and ease with which his lines pour out of him (El-Hage, “Part One” 15). Mousa is considered a stubborn and menacing opponent of many stratagems on the *manbar*. At the time of the Beit Mery duel in 1971, Mousa was still a young *zajal* poet on the rise with much less fame and seniority than Zaghoul. Today Mousa is probably the first name in *zajal* poets in Lebanon, having attained a great deal of celebrity not only from his participation in *zajal* parties and contests but also from his regular appearance on television shows and as a judge at poetry events. He currently hosts a very popular television show entitled “Owfl” which airs weekly on the Lebanese station OTV and features *zajal* recitals and competitions for young poets of *zajal*.

#### 1.4. Orality and Improvisation

Lebanese *zajal* poets have to be able to compose publicly on the spot, often without knowing the topic of the duel prior to the event. *Zajal* poets must therefore be able to compose quickly without breaking the musical or poetic meter and without going off topic. In order to do this, the poets rely on the rules of oral-formulaic composition which, as Lord has described, is a kind of language of its own with its own “grammar within a grammar” (36). Where speakers of regular language are able to spontaneously use nouns and verbs and other words to form phrases, sentences, and paragraphs to express ideas and sentiments, oral poets composing spontaneous verse are able to string together metrical formulas and use formulaic systems and substitutions to express their ideas and images in verse.

A poem or a *zajal* verse only becomes unforgettable when recited by its composer. Its charm and durability are tied to the personality of the poet, his voice, the excellence of his recitation, the quality of his delivery, and his ability to be inspired by the occasion and “capture the image in the frame of spontaneity and eloquence at one and the same time” (El-Hage, “Part One” 2). However, memorization of specific *zajal* verses is the work of listeners, not poets. Often when poets are asked to quote lines that are memorable to listeners and often quoted by *zajal* aficionados, they aren’t able to do so. In a 1989 interview on ART, Zaghoul was asked about the question of memorization, to which he responded, “The *zajal* poet says his verses and goes on...he doesn’t remember or memorize every verse or ode he says, nor does he want to remember most of what he says, to avoid falling into the trap of repeating himself...The poet says his lines and forgets, because his poetry is improvised and produced on the spot...as for the audience, they remember the lines because they repeat them over and over again and they get stuck in their memories for a long time” (qtd. in El-Hage, “Part One” 15).

Zaghloul describes improvised *zajal* poetry as “the hardest poetry” and explains that only a gifted and experienced poet firmly entrenched in the “embrace of rhyme and meter,” and only with tremendous exertion of effort on his part, is capable of singing alongside those greats, those master poets who have dedicated their lives to the art of improvisation and who “have rhyme and meter under their thumbs” (qtd. in El-Hage, “Part One” 16).

Zaghloul’s comments confirm the notion that *zajal* verses composed during verbal duels are improvised, not prepared in advance or memorized or delivered from memory. Indeed it seems this would be much more difficult an endeavor. Instead, the main preparation work that *zajal* poets do takes place over the course of years and decades of apprenticeship during which they internalize and master the “grammatical rules” of the language of oral composition. As far as what kinds of preparations might come before a scheduled *zajal* party or *zajal* match, certainly *zajal* poets can prepare themselves the way a professor prepares before giving a lecture – not by writing down word-for-word, but by preparing bullet notes (in this case mental notes rather than written ones) and an outline of the logical presentation of arguments and ideas. A *zajal* poet will know ahead of time some very important names and images about which he can prepare verses. Not to mention that the Arabic language itself provides a resource of limitless rhymes. These rhymes are associated in the poet’s mind with topics. For example, the topic of “war” immediately brings to the poet’s mind a storehouse of related words that rhyme with each other, such as *ḥarb* (war) and *ḍarb* (hit) and *gharb* (west). In a similar way, a *zajal* poet has stored up a lifetime of rhyme words that rhyme with his own name or nicknames and can easily recall lists of rhymes for any other poet’s name or nickname or for place names or names of hosts and sponsors.

*Zajal* poets prepare for performances in other ways as well. Based on conversations I have enjoyed with great Lebanese *zajal* poet Antoine Saadeh, lead poet of *Jawqat al-Masrah* (*Jawqa* of the Stage), *zajal* poets belonging to the same *jawqa* usually meet once or twice during the weeks leading up to a performance in order to plan the main themes and topics to be treated as well as to assign roles to individual *jawqa* members and to share ideas. When two *jawqas* are scheduled to duel against each other they will also meet ahead of time to plan the sequence of events and determine some of the main themes and topics. This type of preparation is important for all of the poets, but most of all for the younger, less experienced ones. For the sake of the art of *zajal* and all those concerned with it, poets want to avoid at all cost any snags, any lapses in their ability to continue singing on the stage as the occurrence of such a breach would be disastrous. But no matter how well-prepared poets might be, they cannot simply rely on this type of preparation to carry them through an actual appearance on the *zajal* stage. One never knows when an impromptu topic will be suggested by the audience or when one might be asked to “repeat and add” improvised lines. A case in point took place in Calabria, Italy in 2009 at the Vis Musicae Festival on oral poetry of the Mediterranean region to which poets Antoine Saadeh and long-time *jawqa* companion and fellow poet Elias Khalil were invited along with a small group of *riddādi* to perform a Lebanese *zajal* party. The poets had prepared a shortened version of a typical *zajal* show ahead of time in order to give the unfamiliar audience a taste of their art; translators were available for translation into Italian, Spanish, and English. Although the conference was taking place during the summer, the weather all week in the mountain village of Villaggio Mancuso at Sila Piccola National Park where it was being held had been very cold. The nights were even colder. As nightfall approached, everyone was complaining with teeth chattering about the frigid temperatures. Just as the show was about to begin, someone from the

audience shouted a request for the two poets to duel each other on the topic of “cold versus hot.” While this took Antoine and Elias by surprise, each took on one of the oppositions and they were quickly able to trade several stanzas without delay and without the least bit of difficulty, much to the delight of the shivering crowd.

The ability to adapt to this type of unforeseen circumstance is what makes a *zajal* poet worthy of appearing on the stage. And once a poet has attained the status of a *manbar* poet, he never knows when he might suddenly be called upon in the community at large to eulogize a lost loved one or commemorate an important social event in *zajal*. A poet simply cannot prepare for these moments that catch him off guard except by practicing the art of improvisation day in and day out. This is why it is common to see *zajal* poets often standing off to the side, humming verses to themselves, or for one to suddenly withdraw from conversation to quietly work out an inspired idea in verse.

## CHAPTER TWO

### METHODOLOGY

Translating the art of verbal dueling in Lebanon, which is the essential endeavor of this study, will involve multiple layers of translation, many of which are not of the verbal or linguistic sort. The project must include a translation of verbal dueling itself as a cultural practice familiar and second-nature to a Lebanese yet absolutely foreign to a Western, English-speaking audience. To this end, I take an inside-out approach that begins with an analysis of a specific and well-known major verbal duel that took place in the beautiful mountain resort town of Beit Mery, Lebanon, in 1971. I follow a line-by-line transcription, transliteration, and translation from Lebanese dialect into English of the *Iftitāhiyyi qaṣīds* (Introductory odes), *Jawlat al-taḥaddi* (verbal duel exchange), and *Ikhtitāmiyyi qaṣīds* (Closing odes) of Mousa Zoghayb and Zaghloul al-Damour (penname of Joseph Hashem) as performed and recorded at the 1971 Deir al-Qalʿa Festival in Beit Mery, Lebanon.<sup>12</sup> As mentioned already in the Introduction, this well-known *zajal* battle was chosen for this study because of its major popularity among Lebanese all over the world and its prominence in the history of Lebanese *zajal*.

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<sup>12</sup> I have restricted my translation to the portions delivered by the *jawqa* leaders Mousa Zoghayb and Zaghloul al-Damour. The event at Beit Mery began at around 10 p.m. and did not conclude until around 5 a.m. the next morning. In the course of my discussion I will summarize the duels between the other members of each *jawqa* and quote some of the more memorable lines and stanzas.

## 2.1. Transcription and Transliteration

In my attempt to capture and convey a large portion of the Battle of Beit Mery to an English-speaking audience, I begin with a set of materials that include a live audio recording (supplementary audio CD included) and Michel Ziadeh's Arabic transcription published in his book entitled, *Lubnān al-Zajal fī akbar al-mubārayāt: Dayr al-qalʿa 1971 wa al-Madīni al-Riyāḍiyyi 1972*. I also make reference to a partial transcription published in Antoine Butrus al-Khuwayri's *Tārīkh al-Zajal al-Lubnānī* published in 2011. I follow the Arabic spelling conventions used by Ziadeh and al-Khuwayri and edit their transcriptions based on what is heard on the actual recording, making note of any discrepancies. I have included a personal copy of the CD recording given to me by poet Antoine Saadeh as an essential component for the reader's appreciation of the poetic-musical performance, and for convenience I have noted where to cue the recording at every line. A running commentary is included in the form of footnotes which are intended to be read in conjunction with each line of transcription and its successive transliteration, trot translation, and improved translation.

For the transliteration, I am following the Library of Congress standard. In particular, long vowel *alif* (ا) (pronounced like the "a" in the English word "dad") is represented as *ā*, long vowel *wāw* (و) (pronounced like the "ou" in the English word "You") as *ū*, and long vowel *yā* (ي) (pronounced like the "ee" in the English word "keen") as *ī*. The so-called emphatic Arabic consonants, other consonants with no English counterpart, such as *ʿayn* (ع), and the glottal stop *hamza* (ء) (pronounced as the sound at the hyphen in the English expression "Uh-oh"), are represented as given in the chart below:

Transliteration	Arabic
ḥ	ح
kh	خ
ṣ	ص
ḍ	ض
ṭ	ط
ẓ	ظ
<sup>c</sup> (superscript)	ع
gh	غ
‘	ء
‘ or q	ق

Note that the consonant *qāf* (ق) has two possible pronunciations among Lebanese speakers. It is pronounced as “q” as in *fuṣḥā* primarily by Druze<sup>13</sup> and as glottal stop by all others. In the Arabic transcription, words will be spelled with *qāf* (ق) and the pronunciation by the individual poet will be clear through the transliteration.

Because the Arabic transcription does not include the short vowel diacritics *fathā* (َ) (pronounced as the “u” in the English word “but”), *ḍamma* (ُ) (pronounced as the “oo” in the English word “good”), and *kasra* (ِ) (pronounced as the “i” in the English word “give”), an important component of my transliteration is the inclusion of the letters *a*, *u*, and *i*, respectively,

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<sup>13</sup> One of the six major confessional groups in Lebanon. While the Druze are often grouped as Muslims or described as an offshoot of Islam, they are actually neither Muslim nor Christian, but a somewhat mysterious and secretive religion of their own. The Druze are mountain-dwellers and thus have participated throughout their history in the practice and development of Lebanese *zajal*. Most often, a *jawqa* will include one member who is a Druze.



to transcribe these when they occur. For purposes of metrical analysis, a topic I will briefly return to later, a careful transcription and transliteration of the poet's actual utterance is essential.

Footnotes have been inserted in the transliteration line for two main reasons: to point out a discrepancy between the published transcriptions and the actual recording or to make note of prosodic features of the Arabic/Lebanese words and phrases that have poetic impact (which, by definition, are tied to the original language.)

## **2.2. Trot Translation**

Beneath each line of transliteration I have included a literal trot translation into English. Footnotes are added in the trot line to identify historical figures, place names, and other culturally-specific references. Other footnotes are included in the trot line for the purposes of explanation, interpretation, or general commentary on the syntax, intended meaning, idiomatic meaning, or multiple meanings that might arise in a given line. All commentary on the meanings and references associated with each line is restricted to the trot translation so that the final translation will be free of footnotes and thus more readable.

## **2.3. Second Translation**

In the second translation line, my aim is to present a serviceable rendition of the original that is more pleasing than the trot and captures the main thrust of the poet's meaning. Certain nuances will necessarily be lost as a result but will remain available to the reader through reference to the commentary. Also lost in the second translation will be the rhyme patterns and metrical form of the original. Rather than attempting to mimic the rhyme schemes of the original, which would be nearly impossible and likely unpleasing in English if it were somehow carried out, I prefer to convey the catchiness and musicality of the original with an ear to Old

English verse forms that moved musically and rhythmically through alliteration and regular beats. Alliteration in particular, it seems to me, remains even in today's English to be a "fan favorite" among methods for producing phrases with a ring. One does not have to look very far to find a catchy title, headline, or advertising jingle whose secret to success is alliteration. I have tried to avoid overdoing alliteration, though, knowing that too much would trivialize the poetry and nudge it into the realm of cliché. In terms of meter, I have tried to follow a mostly iambic stress pattern and to place important words and images where they will give and receive the strongest syllabic impact.

#### **2.4. Side-by-Side Arabic-English Translation**

While the purpose of this project is not necessarily to produce a stand-alone translation of the original but rather to provide a combination of notes, commentary, and live recording that will hopefully allow the unfamiliar ears and eyes of the listener/reader to appreciate an otherwise inaccessible artistic performance, I do feel a third translation is in order. For this reason, in addition to the line-by-line transcription, transliteration, trot translation, and second translation, I also present, in the form of an appendix, a side-by-side Arabic-English translation in stanza form that is free of footnotes, references, and commentary. In this last version of the English translation, I take one more step towards an improved, poetic, stand-alone rendition, taking some additional liberties now that the imposing presence and details of the original have been removed. For readers interested in literary translation, the project with this added appendix might offer a unique look inside the creative process as it affords the reader not only the opportunity to see, hear, interpret, and appreciate the original, but also invites participation in the translation process itself. Theoretically, given the detailed notes provided about the original,

interested literary translators with no knowledge of Arabic or Lebanese culture could try their hands at shaping their own renditions.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE BATTLE OF BEIT MERY

#### 3.1. *Iftitāhiyyi*: Introductory Odes

The Lebanese verbal duel always begins with an introductory segment referred to as the *Iftitāhiyyi*, a word stemming from the verb *iftataha*, meaning “to open, inaugurate, or to introduce.” During the *Iftitāhiyyi* segment, the leaders of the two competing *jawqas* take one long turn each delivering a number of stanzas of the *qaṣīd* form, which is described in detail in section 3.1.1 below. The determination of which *jawqa* leader has the honor of going first depends upon whether or not the two poets have dueled before. If so, whichever poet closed the previous encounter will open the current one. It is also customary for the second poet to close the current encounter and thus earn the privilege of opening the next battle that might ensue. There might be other factors involved in determining which poet opens a verbal duel event, one being the relative ages and lengths of experience of the two leaders, in which case the elder, more experienced poet will have the honor of going first. This might be a simple way of determining which leader will open a first encounter between the two, and undoubtedly the topics of age versus youth and experience versus inexperience will be brought up during the duel proper. Another factor that might be taken into consideration is the location of the verbal duel. If one of the *jawqa* leaders has special ties to the particular town, for example, then he might be given the honor of opening or closing the duel.

Both *jawqa* leaders can be expected to include a number of thematic ingredients in the content of the six to ten stanzas of the *Iftitāhiyyi*. First, it is of primary importance to thank and show gratitude to the sponsor(s) of the duel. The poet will also recognize the venue by

mentioning the host town by name and complimenting its beauty and its important history. This deference to the host is a good way to begin the all-important task of gaining the support of the audience, which is each poet's main goal throughout the evening. The poet can also be expected to sing of the importance and uniqueness of the tradition of oral poetry and of his individual importance as another great poet in the long line of prodigious *zajal* poets who preceded him. Each poet can be expected to devote many of his lines to boasting about himself and many others to insulting and taking jabs at his opponent. The last stanza of the *Iftitāḥiyyi* usually includes a mention of the other members of the leader's *jawqa* as a way of introducing them to the audience.

There are many advantages to opening the *Iftitāḥiyyi*. Since the first poet leader will be delivering the introductory lines, he can prepare these stanzas ahead of time, filling them with striking imagery, witty insults, and fine words of praise for himself, for the members of his *jawqa*, and for the host town and sponsors. He can infuse his lines with numerous examples of his erudition and worldly knowledge. He can plan out how to work a rich pun into his verses, especially one that might play on his own name or the names of other poets who will be present at the duel. It is an opportunity to shine and to leave a lasting impression on the audience and the judging panel. Moreover, his images and arguments will shape the trajectory of the verbal duel as a whole, beginning immediately with the *Iftitāḥiyyi* delivered by the second *jawqa* leader. Indeed, the second leader will be listening very carefully to the first leader's opening stanzas and will be preparing himself as he listens, composing lines that respond to insults directed at him and finding ways to turn the first poet's own words against him. The images, arguments, and topics introduced in the *Iftitāḥiyyi* segment become clay in the hands of the poets which they shape and reshape throughout the evening.

### 3.1.1. *Qaṣīd* Form: Rhyme and Meter

Each poet's *Iftitāhiyyi* consists of several sung stanzas (usually six or seven of variable length, anywhere from five to twenty lines) of the *zajal* genre known as *qaṣīd*. The term *qaṣīd*, a shortened form of *qaṣīda* (classical ode form), is derived from *qaṣada*, which means both "to intend, mean" and "to sing." The *zajal* poet uses this particular genre to fulfill the specific purpose or intention described above: opening the duel, acknowledging the sponsors and honored guests, appealing to the audience, boasting, jabbing at the opponent, and introducing the members of his *jawqa*.

Musically, the *qaṣīd* form is of the *nathr al-naghamāt* (musical prose) style of Arabic music, which is characterized by a free rhythm and a tendency towards long and frequent use of melisma, coloratura, and other forms of vocal embellishment. As described and elaborated upon by Haydar in his seminal articles<sup>14</sup> and forthcoming book on the metrics of Lebanese *zajal*,<sup>15</sup> *qaṣīd* is one of a number of *zajal* genres whose musical renditions fall under the *nathr al-naghamāt* category. In general, these *nathr al-naghamāt* genres are used by poets during the

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<sup>14</sup>Four articles by Adnan Haydar on the topic include: "The Development of Lebanese *Zajal*: Genre, Meter, and Verbal Duel," "Al-Ḥida, Al-Nadb, Al-Hawrabah and Al-Nawḥ in Lebanese *Zajal* Poetry: A Study of Meter and Rhythm," "Atābā and Mījanā in Lebanese *Zajal* Poetry," and "Mkhammas Mardūd in Lebanese *Zajal*."

<sup>15</sup>Haydar's completed manuscript and forthcoming book entitled "The Metrics of Lebanese *Zajal*" examines and brings into question all of the existing scholarship on the complex and controversial topic of *zajal* metrics and offers an original approach to classifying the various genres of Lebanese *zajal* that takes into consideration the interplay among syllabic versus quantitative poetic meter, poetic and linguistic stress patterns, prosodic features of *fushḥā* versus *ʿāmiyya*, and the previously neglected yet crucial role of musical tunes, beats, and accents. His classification and description of a number of genres of Lebanese *zajal* can be found in the articles listed above. At this time, his section on the *qaṣīd* form referred to here can only be found in the book manuscript.

more serious portions of a *zajal* performance to convey a meaningful point or present an argument or complex idea. If we imagine poetry and music to be in a kind of competition over which aspect of the delivery will control the overall rhythm, the freer musical style of *nathr al-naghamāt* defers to the poetry, or in other words, the poetry writes the music. In contrast, other forms, such as the popular and upbeat *qarrādī* genre, fall into the second Arabic musical style known as *naẓm al-naghamāt* (ordering of tones), which is often employed at some midway point during a long verbal duel in order to awaken new interest or insert a tone of levity. The *naẓm al-naghamāt* musical style is characterized by a regularly rhythmized underlay. It is used for treating lighter and even sometimes nonsensical subjects and the pervasive rhythm in this case imposes itself on the poetry; we might say that in *naẓm al-naghamāt* the music writes the poetry.<sup>16</sup>

In terms of its stanza and line patterns, the *iftitāhiyyi qaṣīd* consists of several stanzas of varying numbers of double-hemistich lines with the same end rhyme employed throughout each stanza. In the opening line of a stanza, which is called *al-maṭlaʿ*, literally “the starting point,” both hemistichs end with the same rhyme. This same type of *maṭlaʿ* was used in the Classical Arabic *qaṣīda* (ode) and is referred to as *taṣrīʿ*. In the successive lines of a stanza, which are called *al-dawr*, literally “the round” or “the turn,” the ends of every first hemistich share another fixed rhyme throughout the stanza. In Arabic poetry consisting of double-hemistich lines, the first hemistich is called *al-ṣadr*, literally the “chest” or “front part,” and the second hemistich is referred to as *al-ʿajz*, literally the “rump.” Thus, each stanza of *qaṣīd* is composed of a variable number of lines in which *al-ṣadr* and *al-ʿajz* of the first line and *al-ʿajz* of the second and all successive lines have the same end rhyme (rhyme a) and *al-ṣadr* hemistichs of all successive lines share a different end rhyme (rhyme b). The fact that the number of lines of a stanza of

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<sup>16</sup> See Haydar’s aforementioned articles on *zajal* metrics.

*qaṣīd* is variable may have given rise to the versatile closure technique used in the stanza of *qaṣīd*, which ends with a line featuring an <sup>c</sup>*ajz* without end rhyme (rhyme x), called *al-kharja*, literally “the exit,” followed by one final *ṣadr* hemistich that maintains the original *ṣadr* end rhyme (rhyme a), called *rujū<sup>c</sup>*, or “return”. This combination of the free rhyme signal and single hemistich finale functions as a type of punctuation, indicating the conclusion of the stanza and its rhymes. Unless the poet has completed his set of *Iftitāḥiyyi* stanzas, he will now begin a new stanza with new end rhymes. Putting all of this together then, a typical stanza of *qaṣīd* will conform to the following rhyme scheme (the number of lines can vary from five to twenty):

<i>ṣadr</i>	<sup>c</sup> <i>ajz</i>
<i>maṭla<sup>c</sup></i> : _____ a	_____ a
<i>dawr</i> : _____ b	_____ a
_____ b	_____ a
_____ b	_____ a
_____ b	_____ a
_____ b	_____ x ( <i>kharja</i> )
_____ a ( <i>rujū<sup>c</sup></i> )	

The opening of Zaghoul al-Damour’s *Iftitāḥiyyi* [12:48-13:53], which is a brief but heart wrenching stanza consisting of only five lines, provides an excellent example of the rhyme scheme under discussion. For purposes of illustration, it is presented here in transliteration with the rhymes in bold text. The Arabic transcription, annotated translation and commentary will be taken up in the translation section below. The stanza begins at the 12:48 mark on the audio recording. When listening along, it is helpful to note that there is not a pause in singing between hemistichs:



Ākh.. Ākh.. I <sup>c</sup> zurīnī yā ħirūf-il-‘abjadiyyī	‘Izā mā ba <sup>c</sup> mil-il-wājib <sup>c</sup> alayyī
[i]Khsirit khayyī-li-mufḍil <sup>c</sup> ā-wlādī	W- <sup>c</sup> alayyī... mitil ‘immī w mitil bayyī
Khamis sā <sup>c</sup> āt šar lū mish [i]zyādī	Mā ḥallu yibtidī-n-nisyān fiyyī
[i]B- <sup>c</sup> azā khayyī rji <sup>c</sup> it <sup>c</sup> azzī fu’ādī	Li’annī b <sup>c</sup> itibir kill shakhiš min <sup>kun</sup>
Ba <sup>c</sup> d mā ghāb khayyī mḥall khayyī <sup>17</sup>	

While the rhyme scheme of the *qaṣīd* form is relatively easy to detect and to describe, the other important prosodic feature – that of meter – is difficult. The reasons for this come mostly from three important features of Lebanese *zajal*: it is composed and delivered orally, it uses the vernacular idiom, and it is sung to a number of well-known traditional folk tunes. Scholars and critics writing on the topic of metrics have tried to describe and classify the genres of Lebanese *zajal* using either a syllabic or a quantitative meter approach or a mixture of the two, invoking scansion systems developed for *fushḥā* or borrowing from Syriac meters, though up until Haydar, none has taken the important role of music into consideration, nor has anyone factored in the important role of oral composition. The most important and striking feature of the *qaṣīd* genre of *zajal* is that it belongs to the *nathr al-naghamāt* (musical prose) style. In addition, some correspondence with al-Khalil’s *rajaz*, *wāfir*, and *sarī*<sup>c18</sup> meters can be found. However, because *zajal* poetry involves a special combination of linguistic and musical features, any metrical analysis is at best only an approximation of metrical content. What is most important to keep in

<sup>17</sup> Translation: *Owkh... Owkh...* Forgive me, O letters of the alphabet/If I am unable to fulfill my duties//I lost my brother, who gave so generously to my children/And to me... Like my mother and my father//He has been gone five hours, not more/Now is not the time for me to start forgetting//But after mourning my brother I also consoled my own heart/Because all of you//Now that my brother is gone, have taken the place of my brother

<sup>18</sup> Al-Khalil Ibn Ahmad first codified the meters of Arabic poetry in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. Each of al-Khalil’s meters is based on quantitative metrical feet consisting of combinations of short and long syllables. Using the symbols  $\sim$  and  $-$  for short and long, respectively, the meters mentioned here are described as follows: *rajaz*  $- - \sim - | - - \sim - | - - \sim -$ ; *wāfir*  $\sim - - \sim - | \sim - - \sim - | \sim - -$ ; *sarī*<sup>c</sup>  $- - \sim - | - - \sim - | - - \sim -$ .

mind is that poets of *zajal*, like all good poets composing any type of poetry in any language, be it from within a written or an oral tradition, do not create their art according to a rule book of metrical prescription. To do so would be to travel down the doggerel road to poetic suicide. Rather, poets of *zajal* learn their craft by living and breathing in its atmosphere, by imbibing and internalizing the tunes, melodies, and rhythms, and by memorizing the great examples of their predecessors. When they create new poetry, they create lines that conform to an underlying prosodic system that, although it is obvious to the audience and the poet himself when the meter is broken, does not have precise rules about how to produce that which is correct. Music, rhyme, and poetic meter based on a combination of quantitative and syllabic-accentual systems together set a basic foundation, a sturdy post to which the poet is tethered. But as the poet wanders out into the unknown world of his particular free creation, he is at liberty to go in numerous directions, take endless twists and turns while still feeling the tug of that tether tying him to proper form.

### **3.1.2. The *Ifitāḥiyyi* of Mousa Zoghayb: Background**

On the occasion of the Beit Mery festival, the opening *Ifitāḥiyyi* is given by Mousa Zoghayb. The reason for this is that in a previous encounter that took place in the Lebanese town of Mishrif ten months earlier, Mousa gave the closing *qaṣīd*. Afterwards, Mousa claimed victory, pointing specifically to the fact that he “got the last word,” a kind of coup on his part. It seems there were words spoken in public by both Mousa and Zaghoul in regards to this incident, something both poets refer to in their opening odes at Beit Mery. Part of the reason for the massive public interest in the encounter at Beit Mery stems from this history of artistic animosity and true rivalry between the two poet leaders. Each had his fervent supporters who came to

cheer him to victory in this encounter which, as becomes clear in the *Iftitāḥiyyi*, was just one in a series of encounters between Mousa and Zaghloul.

### 3.1.3. *Iftitāhiyyi* of Mousa Zoghayb: Transcript, Transliteration, Trot, and Translation

#### First Stanza [0:00 – 02:19]

لشوّ طَلَّ القَسَا بُعْقِدَة جَفُونِي

١/ آوخ، آوخ، آوخ...أنا إنتو، أنا لا تِسْأَلُونِي

00:00 1a) Ōkh, Ōkh, Ōkh<sup>19</sup> (#)<sup>20</sup> ... ‘Anā intū, ‘anā lā tis’alūnī La shū ṭall-il-‘asa b-‘i’dit-i-jfūnī<sup>21</sup>

1b) Owkh, Owkh, Owkh...I am you<sup>22</sup>, I – don’t ask me Why pain/grief peeks through my eyelids

1c) *Owkh, Owkh, Owkh ..You and I are one, don’t ask me Why sadness haunts my eyes*

40

<sup>19</sup> An emphatic expression that is used by *zajal* poets to open a line and to express their charged emotions. More often, the poets will sing “Ōf” rather than “Ōkh.” Both “Ōf” and “Ōkh” are used in everyday speaking to express dismay or as a painful outcry akin to “alas” or “ouch”. During the *zajal* contests poets sometimes lengthen the “Ōf” to underscore their emotions, to show off their voices, and to take extra time to compose their lines. Note that the audience responds with a loud “Ōkh” as well.

<sup>20</sup> The symbol (#) will be used throughout the *Iftitāhiyyi* section to track instances of repetition (echoing back) or fervent applause coming from the audience and the chorus. These will help identify particularly successful moments in the poet’s delivery.

<sup>21</sup> The poet extends this opening end rhyme with a long melisma. Note also that the chosen end rhyme (*ūnī*) is conducive to quick composition as (*nī*) is the object pronoun “me” when added to a verb and (*ī*) is the possessive pronoun “my” and can be added to a noun ending with (*ūn*), which is also very common.

<sup>22</sup> Mousa’s opening words, “I am you,” are both literally and figuratively the poet’s attempt to establish a connection with the audience and gain their favor, compassion, and support.

يجوا حبة وحبّة ينقودوني

٢/ فطمت جودي بعدما كنت بيّدر

00:32 2a) [i]Fṭamit jūdī baʿad ma kinit baydar

Yijū ḥabbi-w-ḥabbi ynaʿūdūnī<sup>23</sup>

2b) I weaned my generosity after being a threshing floor

They came grain by grain pecking at me

2c) *I weaned them from my bounty*

*That threshing floor they pecked grain by grain*

من الحلم الـ عم يداعب ظنوني

٣/ كنت إسهر وشوف الليل أقصر

00:44 3a) Kinit ‘is-har w-shūf il-layl ‘a’ṣar

Min il-ḥilm<sup>24</sup>-il<sup>25</sup>-ʿam ydāʿib ḡnūnī

3b) I would stay awake and see the night shorter

Than the dream that is toying with/caressing my thoughts<sup>26</sup>

3c) *I spent the nights awake, each one much shorter*

*Than the dream teasing my thoughts*

<sup>23</sup> This end rhyme is also extended with melisma.

<sup>24</sup> Mousa uses the comparative ‘a’ṣar (shorter) as the *ṣadr* rhyme at the end of the first hemistich, which leads to an example of enjambment across the hemistichs as he completes the comparison at the start of the second hemistich with the phrase *Min il-ḥilm* (than the dream). In oral formulaic poetry, such enjambment is not common despite the frequent absence of a pause between hemistichs. While enjambment between hemistichs occurs occasionally, enjambment at the line break almost never occurs except at the end of the final full line of the stanza which often runs semantically into the closing single hemistich.

<sup>25</sup> *Min il-ḥilm-il*<sup>25</sup> - (Than the dream that-) It is common in Lebanese dialect to shorten the relative pronoun “*illī*” (that, which) to “*il-*,” as is the case here and provides the poet with an easy way to reduce a two-syllable word to a one-syllable word when he feels the need to do so for the sake of meter.

<sup>26</sup> The meaning of *ḡnūnī* is imprecise: “my thoughts,” or “my beliefs,” or even “my doubts/suspensions.” This suggests it may have been chosen to fit the rhyme and meter.

	لو ما تشتري يقظة عيوني	٤/ وما قدرت عالسرير الإم تسهر
00:54	4a) [W]mā 'idrit °a-s-srīr 'il-'imm tis-har	Law ma tishtirī ya'ẓit-i-°yūnī (#)
	4b) The mother would not be able to stay up at [her infant's] bedside	If she didn't buy the alertness/smarts of my eyes
	4c) <i>No mother could spend long nights over a cradle</i>	<i>Without buying some alertness from my eyes</i>
	صاروا يرفعوني ويرفعوني	٥/ آخ، طلقت فكري بجوانح نسر أسمر
01:06	5a) Ōkh, ['i]ṭla'it fikrī b-jawāniḥ nisir 'asmar <sup>27</sup>	Ṣārū yirfa°ūnī-w-yirfa°ūnī
	5b) Owkh, I fired my thought on the wings of an olive-brown eagle	They raised me up and raised me up
	5c) <i>Owkh, I sent my thoughts on the wings of a dark-feathered eagle</i>	<i>And they lifted me higher and higher</i>

<sup>27</sup> The poet chooses the color أسمر *asmar* (olive-brown; tawny) here to fit the *ṣadr* rhyme (rhyme b), which in this stanza is “*ar*.” It is an interesting word choice. Usually the color أسمر *asmar* is reserved for describing skin color, particularly the dark olive skin tone of many Lebanese. Mousa Zghayb himself is known for his dark complexion. Thus, he makes a subtle metaphorical equation here connecting himself to the “olive-colored eagle”.

من اللي عالتحدّي بيطلبوني

٦/ آخ...حتى صرت شوف الأرض أزغر

01:18 6a) Ḥatta širit shūfī-l-‘arḍ ‘azghar

Min-illī<sup>28</sup> ‘at-taḥaddī-b-yiṭulbūnī (#)

6b) Until I became able see the earth/ground smaller

Than they who asked me to duel

6c) *Until the earth below me shrank, getting smaller*

*Than those who dared me to a duel*

وجنّنت العواصف من جنوني

٧/ آخ...وصرت من حارسين النار أكفر

01:30 7a) Ōkh, w-širit<sup>29</sup> min ḥārsīni-n-nār ‘akfar

W-jannanti-l-‘awāšif min-i-jnūnī

7b) Owkh I became more blasphemous than the guardians of fire<sup>30</sup>

And I drove the tempests mad with my madness

7c) *Owkh, I became more blasphemous than the guardians of fire*

*My madness drove the tempests mad*

<sup>28</sup> Again Mousa uses a comparative adjective at the end of the first hemistich ‘*azghar* (smaller) that is completed with *Min-illī* (than they who...) at the start of the second hemistich. It is another example of enjambment. It is worth noting also that in both cases the comparative adjective was followed by *Min-illī* (than they who). This construction is what Parry and Lord termed a “formulaic system” (Lord 30-67). It is one of the many substitution strategies oral poets use to compose their lines.

<sup>29</sup> Note formulaic use and repetition of the verb (*širit*), literally “I became”. It appeared in line 6 (*Ḥatta širit*), and in plural form in line 5 as part of the phrase (*Ṣārū yirfa‘ūnī*), they started lifting me up.

<sup>30</sup> *ḥārsīni-n-nār* حارسين النار literally “guardians of the fire” could be an allusion to Dante’s Guardians of the Inferno.

فقط أهل المعنى كفروني

٨/ ما كفّرني الزمان ولا المقدّر

01:42 8a) Mā kaffarnī ‘i<sup>31</sup>-z-zamān-w-la-l-‘i-m’addar

Fa’aṭ ‘ahl-i-li-ma<sup>c</sup>annā kaffarūnī (#)

8b) It wasn’t Time or the fates that drove me to blaspheme

Only the people of *ma<sup>c</sup>annā*<sup>32</sup> made me blaspheme

8c) *Neither Time nor the Fates drove me to blaspheme*

*Only the people of ma<sup>c</sup>annā caused me to curse*

عأ أحلام القساوي والليوني

٩/ وما جايي برفقة الزغلول إكبر

01:53 9a)[iw] Ma jāyi brif’it ‘iz-Zaghlūl ‘ikbar

‘a ‘aḥlām<sup>33</sup> il-‘asāwī w-il-liyūnī

9b) I haven’t come here with Zaghloul to make myself bigger

On the dreams of harshness and softness

9c) *I didn’t come here to grow bigger in Zaghloul’s company*

*Crooning of harsh or tender dreams*

<sup>31</sup> This extra short vowel is the result of Mousa’s short pause after “kaffarnī”. The regular meter would not require this short vowel. It is an example of “poetic license” employed by *zajal* poets under the pressure of live improvisation.

<sup>32</sup> *Ma<sup>c</sup>annā* is being used here as a metonymy for *zajal*. The term *ma<sup>c</sup>annā* المعنى can also be used to refer to the common subgenre of *zajal* which, with *qarradi* القرادي, is one of the two most common genres of *zajal*. In oral poetry performances, poets use the words *zajal* and *ma<sup>c</sup>annā* interchangeably as synonyms.

<sup>33</sup> The long *alif* (ā) is extended with melisma here. This is another means by which the poet will give himself time to think as well as display and draw attention to his voice.



02:05 10a) Jāyi [i]b-jaw'tī tawwij-il-manbar

[W] khallī ['i]b-‘alib ha-l-lijni-l-karīmi<sup>34</sup>

10b) I've come here with my *jawqa*<sup>35</sup> to crown the *manbar*<sup>36</sup> And leave [s.th.] in the hearts of this generous judging panel

10c) *I've come with my jawqa to place a crown on the manbar And enter the hearts of this honorable panel*

١١ / البعد ما بيعرفوني يعرفوني

11a) [i]L-ba'id ma-b-ya'irfūnī ya'irfūnī (#)

11b) So those who still don't know me will know me

11c) *So those who still don't know me will know exactly who I am*

<sup>34</sup> Note that the poet has changed the end-rhyme here (from *ūnī* to *īmi*). This is the <sup>c</sup>*ajz* non-rhyme (rhyme x) that signals he has reached the end of his stanza. His next and final line will be a single hemistich featuring a return (*rujū'*) to the original rhyme a, the characteristic closure technique used in the *qaṣīd* stanza form.

<sup>35</sup> The *jawqa* is the team of poets. Mousa Zoghayb's *jawqa* was called the *Jawqa* of Khalil Rukuz with members: Mousa Zoghayb, Anees al-Fghālī, Jiryis al-Bustany, and Butrous Deeb. Joseph al-Hashem (penname Zaghoul al-Damour) leads the *Jawqa* of Zaghoul al-Damour with members: Joseph al-Hashem, Zayn Sh'ayb, Tali' Hamdan, and Edouard Harb.

<sup>36</sup> *Manbar*, literally “stage” or “pulpit” also refers figuratively to the courageous act the *zajal* poet performs when appearing on the stage singing improvised verses before a large, live, critical audience.

## Second Stanza [2:21- 4:13]

وَدَهَبَ مَدْفُونٌ بِزَوَايَا الْمَغَارَةِ

١/ كان الشَّعْرُ مِينَا بُلَا مَنَارَةِ

02:21 1a) Kān-i-sh-shi<sup>c</sup>r mina-b-lā manāra

[W] dahab madfūn bi-zwāya-l-['i]mghāra

1b) Poetry used to be a seaport with no lighthouse

Gold buried in the nooks of the cave

1c) *Poetry was once a seaport without a lighthouse*

*Gold buried in the crannies of a cave*

لَقَا مُحِبِّينَ مَشَ صَفْقَةَ تِجَارَةِ

٢/ رَجَعَ "مِشَالُ" هَالْحَفْلَةِ نَبَّيْ

02:30 2a) Riji<sup>c</sup> Mīshāl ha-l-ḥafli tbanna

Li'a mḥibbīn mish ṣaf'it tijāra

2b) Michel<sup>37</sup> came back to adopt this *zajal* party

A meeting of true enthusiasts not just a money-making venture

2c) *Then Michel came along to sponsor this duel*

*A meeting of aficionados, not wheelers and dealers*

<sup>37</sup> The reference is to Michel Ziadeh, a *zajal* aficionado and sponsor of the Beit Meri event. He is also the author of the book *Lubnān al-Zajal: Fī Akbar al-Mubārayāt – Dayr al-Qala<sup>c</sup>a 1971 wa al-Madīna al-Riyāḍiyya 1972*, which contains the Arabic transcription of the Battle of Beit Mery referenced in this study.

٣/ والكانوا يهربوا بالأمس مِنَّا

كَأَنَّهُمْ بِكَاسِنَا عَدَوَى وَمَرَارَةً

02:39 3a) Wi-l k̄nū yihirbū bi-l-‘amis minna

Ka’annu-b-kāsna ‘adwa-w-marāra

3b) And those who used to flee from us in the past<sup>38</sup>

As if in our cup there was enmity and bitterness

3c) *And people who used to flee from us before*

*As if our cup was filled with enmity and bitterness*

حِلْمٌ أبيضٌ بعَيْنَيْنِ العَذَارَى

٤/ اجو يَنَّاكْدُوا إِنَّاو المَعْنَى

02:47 4a) ‘Ijū yit’akkadū ‘innu-l-[i]ma‘annā

Hilim ‘abyaḍ bi-‘aynayn-il-‘azāra (#)

4b) [They] came to make sure that *ma‘anna*

Is a white dream in the eyes of virgins

4c) *Have come here to make sure that ma‘anna*

*Is a pure white dream in the eyes of virgins*

ضَرُورِي نَقَابِلِ الدَّهْرِ بُجَسَارَةً

٥/ يَا زَغْلُولُ لَوِ الْمَوْتِ امْتَحَنًا

02:58 5a) Yā Zaghlūl law-l-mawt-i-mtaḥannā

Ḍarūri n’ābil-id-dahr<sup>39</sup> [i]bjasāra

5b) O Zaghloul even if we are tested by death<sup>40</sup>

We must meet eternity with boldness

5c) *O Zaghloul, even if we are tested by death*

*We must face the Fates with boldness*

<sup>38</sup> Mousa is making reference here to the lower status and in some cases disdain for oral vernacular folk poetry in the eyes of literary critics in contrast with their high regard for *Fuṣṣḥā* as the superlative artistic mode.

<sup>39</sup> In Ziadeh’s transcript الدهر *ad-dahr* (eternity; a lifetime) was given as الموت *al-mawt* (death). They are synonymous in context and are metrically identical.

<sup>40</sup> Mousa is bringing up the topic of death because Zaghloul’s brother died only a few hours before the duel.

وَحَطَفَلِي ابْن زَنْبَقَةِ الطَّهَارَةِ

٦/ انا عَلَيَّي الْفَنَا قَبْلَكَ تَجَنَّى

03:10 6a) Ana i<sup>c</sup>layyi-l-fanā ‘ablak tajanna (x 2)<sup>41</sup>

[W] khaṭaflī ibin zanba’ti-ṭ-ṭahāra

6b) I, perdition incriminated me before you

And plucked from me the son of the lily of purity<sup>42</sup>

6c) *Perdition struck its blow on me long before you*

*And plucked from me that tender child, that pure lily blossom*

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<sup>41</sup> Note that Mousa repeats this hemistich once. Such repetition is allowed and is a common occurrence and strategy poets use to give themselves time to mentally compose without pausing their singing. Note also the extra word “*Ana*” and inverted syntax of this hemistich, both to help achieve the proper meter and rhyme. The repetition also draws attention to the hemistich for its meaning and because what he is about to say next is important.

<sup>42</sup> Mousa is making a reference here to having lost his young son, Rabee<sup>c</sup>, who drowned as a child. This sad memory is likely another reason why Mousa repeated the first hemistich, because he was choked up at the remembrance of that old wound. Also, Mousa is reminding the audience of his own tragic experiences because he knows Zaghoul is arriving to the *manbar* only a few hours after the death of his brother. Certainly Zaghoul will have the audience’s sympathy, so Mousa is trying to preempt this with his own sad story to elicit sympathy and gain the audience’s support.

عَا تَمَّو الضَّحْكَ وَبَقَلُّو المَرَارَةَ

٧/ والشَّاعِرُ دَوْمٌ يَمْشِي عَالِاسِنَّةٍ

03:23 7a) Wi-sh-shā<sup>c</sup>ir dawm yimshī <sup>c</sup>al-‘asinna

<sup>c</sup>a timmu-ḡ-ḡihik-w- b’albu-l-marāra<sup>43</sup> (#)

7b) The poet, all the time walks on nails<sup>44</sup>

A smile on his lips and in his heart bitterness

7c) *A poet walks a long road of nails*

*With a smile on his lips and bitterness in his heart*

وَكَشَفَ كُلَّ الْوُجُوهِ الْمُسْتَعَارَةَ

٨/ زَجَلْنَا مَلَا حِمَ فَلَاسْطِينَ غَنَّى

03:33 8a) Zajalnā mlāḥim Flastīn ghanna<sup>45</sup>

[W] kashaf kill-il-wujūh-il-musta<sup>c</sup>āra

8b) Our *zajals* sang the epics of Palestine

And uncovered all the ‘borrowed faces’<sup>46</sup>

8c) *Our zajals sang the epics of Palestine*

*Unmasking all the borrowed faces*

<sup>43</sup> The extended melisma on end word *marāra* (bitterness) helps to emphasize its meaning and draw attention to the poet’s hardship.

<sup>44</sup> In Ziadeh’s transcript this hemistich is given as: طريق الشاعر جروح واسِنَّة *Tarī’ –i-sh-shā<sup>c</sup>ir jurūḥ w ‘asinna* (The poet’s road is wounds and nails).

<sup>45</sup> Note the inverted word order in this hemistich. Natural word order would be “*Ghanna zajalna mlāḥim Flastīn*” or “*Zajalna ghanna mlāḥim Flastīn*” but neither one would put the rhyme word “*ghanna*” at the end of the hemistich. This flexibility of Arabic syntax is one of the main reasons this type of composition is even possible. Of all the tools and strategies available to the poet of *zajal*, veering away from natural syntax in order to arrange rhymes is without a doubt the most frequently used.

<sup>46</sup> The term وجوه مستعارة *wujūh musta<sup>c</sup>āra*, literally means “borrowed faces.” Figuratively, it means “masked faces,” “false faces,” or “hypocrites.”

	عِبَارَةٌ لِلرَّئِيسِ وَالْوِزَارَةِ	٩ / وَالْيَ بِاسْمِ الْمَعْنَى فِي وَطَنَّا
03:43	9a) W-‘ilī [‘i]b-‘ismi-l-[i]ma <sup>c</sup> annā fī waṭan-na	‘ibāra li-r-ra’īs-w-li-l-wizāra
	9b) And I have, in the name of <i>ma<sup>c</sup>anna</i> in our homeland	An expression for the President and for the Ministry
	9c) <i>In the name of the ma<sup>c</sup>anna of our homeland</i>	<i>I would like to say to the President and his Cabinet</i>
	وَالُو عَا مَوْطَنُو شَوْقٍ وَحَرَارَةٍ	١٠ / إِذَا مُهَاجِرٌ بِأَرْضِ الْغَرْبِ جَنَّا
03:50	10a) <sup>47</sup> ‘Izā mhājir bi-‘arḍi-l-gharb janna <sup>48</sup>	[W] ‘ilu <sup>c</sup> ā mawṭanu shaw’-w-ḥarāra <sup>49</sup>
	10b) If an émigré in the land of the West makes a fortune	And he has for his homeland longing and a fever
	10c) <i>If an emigrant finds fortune in the West</i>	<i>But has a feverish longing for his homeland</i>

<sup>47</sup> Both hemistiches of this line were left out of Ziadeh’s transcription.

<sup>48</sup> Another instance of inverted syntax.

<sup>49</sup> Inverted syntax here also.

١١ / اذا بَدُكُنْ يَرْجِعْ لِعِنَّا

وَدَوَّلُو بِاسْمِ لِبْنَانِ شَاعِرْ

03:59 11a) ‘Iza badkun yirja<sup>c</sup> l-<sup>c</sup>in-na<sup>50</sup>

Waddū-lu b-‘ism Libnān shā<sup>c</sup>ir<sup>51</sup>

11b) If you want him to come back to us

Send him in the name of Lebanon a poet<sup>52</sup>

11c) *And you want to help him find his way home*

*Send him a Poet in the name of Lebanon*

١٢ / كَانُكُنْ عَمَّ تَوَدَّلُو سَفَارَةَ

12a) Ka’ann-kun <sup>c</sup>ami-twaddū-lu safāra (#)

12b) As though you were sending him an embassy

12c) *You would be sending him an entire embassy*

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<sup>50</sup> Ziadeh’s transcript writes إِذَا كَانَ بَدُكُنْ *‘Iza kān baddkun*, which means the same thing but uses an extra word.

<sup>51</sup> Inverted syntax; also note once again the breaking of the end rhyme to signal the coming of the final single hemistich and end of the stanza.

<sup>52</sup> In addition to the allusion to the tradition of Lebanese *zajal* poets traveling abroad to perform for Lebanese immigrant communities around the world, Mousa is making a plea to the Lebanese government (whose officials may well be in the audience) to provide financial support to *zajal* poets for this purpose and to support their art in general.

### Third Stanza [4:14 – 7:00]

		١/ اوخ، زَجَلْنَا احْتَلَّ ذِرْوَةَ إِزْدِهَارُو	
		فَرَضْ عَا كُلِّ مَوْقِفْ إِعْتِبَارُو	
04:14	1a) Ōkh, Zajal-nā ‘iḥtall zirwit izdihārū	Faraḍ ‘ā kill maw’af ‘i‘tibārū	
	1b) Owkh..Our <i>zajal</i> has reached the peak of its flourishing	And imposed upon every situation its importance	
	1c) <i>Owkh..Our zajal has flourished to the fullest</i>	<i>Imposing its importance in every situation</i>	
		٢/ انطَلَقْ عَا الْكُونْ مِنْ سِجْنُو الْمُؤَبَّدْ	
		تَا يَعْطِي النَّاسْ فِكْرَةَ عَنْ عُيَارُو	
04:25	2a) [i]Nṭala’ ‘a-l-kawn min sijnu-l-[i]m’abbad	Tā ya‘ṭī-n-nās fikra ‘an [i]‘yārū	
	2b) It was released into the universe from its life imprisonment	In order to give people an idea about its standards	
	2c) <i>It was released into the world from life imprisonment</i>	<i>So everyone could know of its high standards</i>	



04:33 3a) [‘i]-l-Miṭrān-i-l-i‘lā‘ī, ‘ibin Liḥfad

[i]Tghanna, w-i-z-zajal jallal wi’ārū

3b) Bishop al-Qila’i<sup>53</sup>, son of Lehfed<sup>54</sup>

Sang [zajal], and *zajal* exalted his high dignity<sup>55</sup>

3c) *Bishop al-Qila’i, Lehfed’s native son,*

*Sang zajal and zajal exalted his own high dignity*

<sup>53</sup> Jabra’il Ibn al-Qila’i was the Lebanese-born bishop of Nicosia and a Maronite apologetic who was born in the Lebanese town of Lehfed, in Jbeil district, between 1445-1450, and died in 1516. Well-versed in Arabic and Syriac, he was also a poet of *zajal*, a “poet-priest”, who popularized Catholic dogma and Maronite church history in vernacular poetry. An eye disease left his face disfigured and gave rise to the nickname “*al-‘amīṣ*” – drippy-eyed. He excelled at *zajal* from an early age and maintained his passion for it throughout his life, using it to express his ideas and publicize them. Not only was he an excellent *zajal* poet, but his fame rose on account of his theological writings that were translated and adapted from Latin and which were used widely in Maronite clerical schools and were the sole resource for an entire century. In his *zajals*, he often addressed villages in the north, the Jbayl region, Kesrouan, naming specific villages, including Beit Mery (Khoury 35-36).

<sup>54</sup> The municipality of Lehfed is located in the Byblos district of Lebanon. It is a mountainous area with strong ties to the Maronite Church and Lebanese history. It is the locale of the summer residence of the Archdiocese of Byblos, the summer residence of the President of Lebanon, and the birth place of Lebanese Saint Father Estephan Nehme.

<sup>55</sup> Note the tangled syntax and the confusion around whose dignity was exalted – the Bishop’s or *Zajal*’s? Clarification can be found in that *wi’ār* (high dignity) is usually associated with religious figures.

لها اللون الجلو وبارك ثمارو

٤/ والبطرك العاقوري ثودد

04:40 4a) W-il-Batrak il-<sup>c</sup>Ā'ūrī twaddad

Li-ha-l-lawn il-ḥilu-w-bārak [‘i]tmārū

4b) And Patriarch al-Aquri<sup>56</sup> had great affection

For this sweet color [genre] and blessed its fruits

4c) *And Patriarch Aquri had great affection*

*For this sweet genre and gave his blessing to its fruits*

أناشيدو صلا للدين صاروا

٥/ وحتى مار افرام بكل معبد

04:47 5a) W-ḥatta Mār Ifrām [‘i]b-kill ma<sup>c</sup>bad

‘Anāshīdu ṣalā li-d-dīn ṣārū<sup>57</sup> (#)

5b) And even Saint Ephrem<sup>58</sup> in every temple

His songs prayers of religion became<sup>59</sup>

5c) *And even Saint Ephrem’s songs, in every place of worship, Became pious hymns of prayer*

<sup>56</sup> Patriarch Yohanna al-Aquri (died 1647) was bishop and resided at Mar Yohanna monastery in Kesrouan, Lebanon beginning in 1643. A forty-six-page remnant of a book of his *zajal* compositions was found containing numerous incomplete verses to St. Marina, a girl who disguised herself as a boy in order to enter the monastery but was later discovered (Whaybeh 142).

<sup>57</sup> First rhyme in this stanza whose “ū” ending doesn’t mean “his”; it is the past tense third-person plural suffix. In this case, “they became.” This is also another repetition of the formulaic verb “to become” mentioned earlier.

<sup>58</sup> Ephrem the Syrian was a Syriac deacon and a prolific Syriac-language hymnographer and theologian of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. His works are hailed by Christians throughout the world, and many denominations venerate him as a saint. The Maronite liturgical service is taken mainly from Saint Ephrem’s hymns and songs. (Catholic Online/Saints)

<sup>59</sup> Note again the tangled syntax, beginning with the end of the first hemistich: *W-ḥatta Mār Ifrām [‘i]b-kill ma<sup>c</sup>bad//‘Anāshīdu ṣalā li-d-dīn ṣārū*. (And even St. Ephrem in every temple/his songs prayers for religion became). Untangling the syntax: And even St. Ephrem’s songs became hymns of prayer in every temple.

وقصيدو للجبل رَجَف حُجارو

٦ / "المير بشير" بالأزجال عَدَد

04:57 6a) ‘il-Mīr [‘i]Bshīr bi-l-‘azjāl ‘addad

[W]‘aṣīdu li-l-jabal rajjaf [‘i]ḥjārū

6b) Emir Bashir<sup>60</sup> [in] *zajals* made numerous<sup>61</sup>

And his ode to the mountain shook its stone

6c) *Emir Bashir was a prolific zajal poet*

*His ode to the mountain shook its foundation*

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<sup>60</sup> Note that in Ziadeh’s transcript, the name is given as فخر الدين Fakhreddine rather than ‘il-Mīr [‘i]Bshīr . Emir Bashir Shihab (1767-1850) was a Lebanese prince who established hegemony over Lebanon in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Encyclopaedia Britannica Online). Emir Fakhr ad-Din II (1572-1635) was a Druze prince and Lebanese ruler from 1593-1633 who united the Druze and Maronite districts of the Lebanon Mountains. He is frequently regarded as the father of modern Lebanon (Encyclopaedia Britannica Online). Both Emirs composed *zajal* poems and both are familiar names to the audience symbolizing the greatness of Lebanese history and identity.

<sup>61</sup> Syntax again is inverted.

ربي بدمو المعنى وما استعارو

٧/ وناصيف اليازجي البحرّين أوجد

05:06 7a) W Nāṣīf –l-Yāzji-l-baḥrayn ‘awjad

Ribi b-damm-u-l-[i]ma<sup>c</sup>anna-w-ma-sta<sup>c</sup>ārū

7b) And Nasif al-Yaziji<sup>62</sup> who set down “al-Bahrayn”

Grew up with *ma<sup>c</sup>anna* in his blood and didn’t borrow it

7c) *And Nasif al-Yaziji, great composer of “al-Bahrayn,”*

*Was born with ma<sup>c</sup>anna pulsing through his veins*

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<sup>62</sup> Nasif al-Yaziji (1800-1871) was a Greek Catholic author and leading figure from Mount Lebanon. He began composing poetry at age 10. When he finished his studies Emir Bashir called upon him to serve as one of his scribes. He served in this role for twelve years. One of his greatest and most celebrated works is his collection of *maqāmāt* (genre of Arabic rhythmic prose) entitled “Majma<sup>c</sup> al-Baḥrayn” literally, “The meeting of the two seas.” Mousa alludes to this work in the same line. In addition to his numerous literary contributions, he composed many *zajal* poems, some of which were preserved after his death (Whaybeh 91).

اللغة ربيث على خميرة ديارو

٨/ وابن نخلة تشيد الأرز أنشد

05:15 8a) [‘iw] Ibin Nakhli nashīd-i-l-arz ‘anshad

[i]-l-Lugha ribyit ‘ala khmīrit [i]dyārū

8b) And son of Nakhleh<sup>63</sup> the cedars anthem he composed<sup>64</sup>

Language was raised on the yeast<sup>65</sup> of his dwelling places

8c) *And Rashid Nakhleh composed the anthem of our cedars*

*Language itself rose by the yeast fermenting in his home*

أميرو وسيدو ورافع شعارو

٩/ وإلا بالمعنى ما استشهد

05:22 9a) [W]‘illā bi-l-[i]ma<sup>c</sup>anna ma-stashhad

‘Amīrū-w-sayydū-w-rāfi<sup>c</sup> shi<sup>c</sup>ārū (#)

9b) And only with *ma<sup>c</sup>anna* could he cite his sources<sup>66</sup>

[He was] Its prince and master, holding up its banner

9c) *The only references he cited were verses of ma<sup>c</sup>anna*

He was its prince and lord and bearer of its banner

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<sup>63</sup> Rashid Nakhleh (1873-1939): Known as *Emīr al-Zajal al-Lubnānī* (Prince of Lebanese *Zajal*), he was a prolific Maronite poet who also wrote the Lebanese national anthem. He was so outspoken about his nationalism and love for Lebanon that he was exiled to Turkey for several years by the Ottomans. In 1926, his entry won the National Anthem competition. The music was composed by the famous musician Wadee’ Sabra. Nakhleh refused to accept the award money, requesting that it be given to charity and orphanages. His poetry remains very popular and well-known among Lebanese today (Khoury 398-399).

<sup>64</sup> Syntax

<sup>65</sup> The idiomatic expression “*ribi-l-‘ajīn*” means “the dough has risen,” that is, after the yeast has done its job making the dough rise.

<sup>66</sup> Syntax

١٠ / وعا إيّامو إجا الشحرور أسعد

جناحو من سما "بُدادون" طاروا

05:32 10a) [W]<sup>67</sup>a 'iyyāmu 'ija-sh-shahrūr 'As'ad

Jnāḥu min sama "Bdādūn" ṭārū

10b) And in his days came the Shahrour (blackbird) As'ad<sup>67</sup>

His wings from the sky of Bdadoun flew

10c) *And in those days came Shahrour al-Wadi*

*Whose wings took flight from the skies of Bdadoun*

على كَرّة قصيدو وابتكّارو

١١ / وعَيْنَيْن الملك فاروق جَمَد

05:42 11a) [W] 'aynayn-il-malak Fārū' jammad

'ala karrit 'aṣīdu-w-'ibtikārū

11b) And the eyes of King Farouk<sup>68</sup> he froze

On the tune of his *qasid* and his innovation

11c) *And King Farouk's eyes were mesmerized*

*On hearing those verses so full of invention*

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<sup>67</sup> As'ad al-Khoury al-Faghali (1894 – 1937): Known as Shahrour al-Wadi (Blackbird of the Valley), born in Bdadoun, a town in Mount Lebanon. He began learning poetry at a very young age in a home filled with *zajal*, as his father Louis al-Faghali, was a great poet. At the young age of ten he made his debut as a *zajal* poet when accompanying his father at a wedding celebration he responded to an attack by another poet against his father. He founded the first organized *zajal jawqa* in 1928 and laid down the foundation of the *zajal* "manbar" (pulpit). The famous singer Sabah was one of many popular artists to sing his folk compositions, and she was proud to claim her relation as Shahrour's niece. (Khoury 90-91) Several *zajal* poets are given birds' names as nicknames in order to suggest the excellence of their voices. Mousa's opponent, Zaghloul al-Damour, (Baby Dove of Damour) is another example.

<sup>68</sup> King Farouk I of Egypt (1920-1965), king of Egypt from 1936 to 1952.

لَحَتَّى الْكَلِّ يَتَفَيُّوا أَثَارُو

١٢ / وطريق الشعر للجوقات عبّ

05:49 12a) [W] ʔarīʾ-i-sh-shiʿr li-l-jawʾāt ʿabbad

La-ḥatta-l-kill yiʾtifyū ʿasārū

12b) And the road of poetry with the *jawqas* he paved

So that all could follow in his footsteps

12c) *He paved the road of poetry for our jawqas*

*So all could follow in his footsteps*

تَمَرُّدُ سَيْفٍ عَم تَلْهَبُ شَفَارُو

١٣ / وإجا "روكز" على المنبر تَمَرَّد

05:56 13a) [W] ʾijā “Rūkuz” ʿala-l-manbar tamarrad

Tamarrud<sup>69</sup> sayf ʿam tilhib [ʾi]shfārū (#)

13b) And “Rukuz”<sup>70</sup> came to the *manbar* and rebelled

The rebellion of a sword whose blade is on fire

13c) *And along came Rukuz as rebel to the manbar*

*Waving that fiery sword of rebellion*

<sup>69</sup> Note the use of the cognate accusative, a literary rhetorical device used to emphasize the intensity of the verb both semantically and acoustically through repetition: *tamarrad* (verb) *tamarrud* (gerund), literally “rebelled a ...rebellling”. In this construction, the gerund is always modified with an adjective or descriptive phrase. In this case, “He rebelled the rebelling/rebellion of a sword whose blade is on fire.” With the mention of the beloved and well-known great *zajal* poet Khalil Rukuz (see next footnote) coupled with this emphatic cognate accusative construction, Mousa gets a fervent applause from the audience with this line.

<sup>70</sup> Khalil Rukuz (1922-1962). Despite his lack of schooling beyond age ten, he developed his incredible talent for *zajal* poetry at a young age. He met Joseph al-Hashem (Zaghloul al-Damour) in 1950 and they developed a strong relationship that soon led to the creation of a *Jawqa* including Rukuz, Zaghloul, and Zayn Shʾayb (also present at the Beit Meri battle as part of the *Jawqa* of Zaghloul al-Damour). In 1954, Rukuz established *Jawqat al-Jabal* (*Jawqa* of the Mountain) which came to include Mousa Zoghayb. Mousa’s *jawqa* at Beit Meri is called *Jawqat Rukuz* after this great, prolific, and highly influential *zajal* poet who died at the young age of 40 from complications after surgery (Whaybeh 362).

ونال من الثقة إكليل غارو

١٤ / وبعد ما طعم وطور وجدد

06:04 14a) [W] ba<sup>c</sup>d ma ʔa<sup>cc</sup>am-w-ʔawwar-w- jaddad

[W] nāl min-i-s-si'a 'iklīl ghārū

14b) And after he nourished ,developed, and renewed [*zajal*]

And earned from trustworthiness his wreath of laurels

14c) *And after nourishing zajal, developing, and renewing it*

*And earning a wreath of laurels for his trustworthiness*

من الثلج، اسألوا العلقوا وتباروا

١٥ / افتتح درب التحدّي بقلب أبرد

06:11 15a) ['i]Ftataḥ darb-it-taḥaddi b-'alib 'abrad

Min-i-t-talj, 'is'alū-l-<sup>c</sup>il'ū-w-tbārū (#)

15b) He opened the path of verbal dueling with a heart colder

Than ice<sup>71</sup>, ask those who got ensnared in a contest<sup>72</sup>

15c) *He forged the path of verbal dueling with a heart colder*

*than ice, just ask anyone who got caught in a contest*

<sup>71</sup> Note another instance of enjambment between hemistichs again using a comparative construction “colder/than ice.”

<sup>72</sup> Mousa is bringing up Zaghoul's past and his relationship with the great Rukuz. While Zaghoul and Rukuz began as partners in the same *jawqa*, Zaghoul later on became one of Rukuz's major opponents. This is Mousa's first jab at Zaghoul in this stanza.



من الحصن الكعي اسكندر خُصارو

١٦ / وبقي الجوق الخليلي حصن أصمد

06:21 16a) [iW] bi'ī-l-jaw'ī-l-Khalīlī ḥuṣun 'aṣmad

Min-il-ḥuṣni-l-ki'ī 'Iskandar ḥiṣārū (#)

16b) And the Khalili<sup>73</sup> *jawqa* remains as a fortress sturdier

Than the fortress<sup>74</sup> Alexander couldn't besiege<sup>75</sup>

16c) *Rukuz's jawqa remains as a sturdy fortress, sturdier*

*than the fortress Alexander grew tired trying to capture*

عا هالعميان ما بيطلع نهارو

١٧ / بَقْلَة حاجبو في ليل أسود

06:29 17a) Bi-'aflit ḥājbu fī layl 'aswad

ʿa h-al-ʿimyān ma byiṭlaʿ nhārū (#)

17b) Upon the knitting of his eyebrows there is black night

On these blind people, whose day never comes

17c) *When he wrinkled his eyebrows a black night settled in*

*Whose daylight never broke on these blind folks*<sup>76</sup>

<sup>73</sup> The reference is to Rukuz's first name, Khalil.

<sup>74</sup> Note another enjambment across the hemistichs using the comparative construction “sturdier/ than the fortress.”

<sup>75</sup> The battle Mousa might be referring to is when Alexander the Great attempted to besiege Tyre in south Lebanon. Alexander was enraged because of the staunch resistance of the fortress city.

<sup>76</sup> Mousa is subtly referring to Zaghloul and his troupe as “these blind folks.” This is a second jab at Zaghloul for which Mousa gets a fervent applause from the audience and the *riddādi*.

أشرف ما يتلّت إنكسارو

١٨ / هوني بُنصَح الزَّغْلُول يَبْعَد

06:37 18a) Hawni binṣaḥ-i-z-Zaghlūl yib<sup>c</sup>ad

‘Ashraf ma ytallit ‘inkisārū (#)

18b) Here I advise Zaghloul to stay away <sup>77</sup>

Better for him not to triple his losses

18c) *Here I would advise Zaghloul to stay away*

*And not risk losing for a third time* <sup>78</sup>

بقلب الدَّير أيا جوق مّا

١٩ / وبآخر ملتقى الله ببشهاد

06:47 19a) [W] bi-‘ākhir multa’a Allāh b-yishhad

b-‘alb-id-dayr ‘ayya jaw’ minnā

19b) At the last meeting God is witness

Inside the monastery which *jawqa* among us

19c) *At the final meeting, with God as our witness,*

*Inside this monastery, which of our jawqas*

٢٠ / بدو يلوح بَيرَق إنتصارو

20a) Baddu ylūḥ bayra’ ‘intiṣārū (#)

20b) Will wave the banner of its victory

20c) *Will get to fly the victory flag?*

<sup>77</sup> This is a direct jab at Zaghloul, Mousa’s third jab in this stanza and the main theme of the remaining hemistiches: our *jawqa* is going to annihilate your *jawqa*. The audience responds with a burst of laughter.

<sup>78</sup> Mousa is referring to previous verbal duel encounters between Zaghloul and himself where Mousa claimed he was the winner.

#### Fourth Stanza [07:01 - 08:12]

	عاً سطوة جوق بوالخل الرباعي	١ / اشهدي بالدير يا اقدم قلاعي
07:01	1a) ‘Ishhadī bi-d-dayr yā ‘a’dam [i]’lā <sup>79</sup>	‘a saṭwit jaw’ bū-l-khull[i]-r-rubā <sup>c</sup>
	1b) Bear witness in this monastery, O most ancient citadel	To the might of the fourfold <i>jawqa</i> of “Bu-l-Khull” <sup>80</sup>
	1c) <i>Inside this monastery, O most ancient citadel, bear witness</i>	<i>To the power of the foursome of Khalil’s great jawqa</i>
	الظهر منك على البث الاذاعي	٢ / ويا زغلول ما بيسوى التجني
07:13	2a) [W] yā Zaghlūl mā b-yiswā-t-tajannī	[i]z-zāhar minnak ‘alā-l-bathth[i]-l-‘izā <sup>c</sup>
	2b) O Zaghloul, it is not good to make false accusations	[Like those] that came from you on the radio broadcast <sup>81</sup>
3	2c) <i>Zaghloul, it isn’t right to make false accusations</i>	<i>Like the ones you broadcast on the radio</i>

<sup>79</sup> Note the repetition of this word, [i]’lā<sup>c</sup>ī which was mentioned earlier, in third stanza, line 3, first hemistich: “Bishop al-Qila’i.”

<sup>80</sup> i.e. Khalil Rukuz

<sup>81</sup> Mousa here is referring to some remarks made by Zaghloul against him in the press.

وبايدي كنت اطوع من يراعي

٣/ عشت حدي عواطف مستكنّي

07:21 3a) ʿIshit ḥaddī ʿawāṭif mistakinnī

[W] b-īdī kinit ʿaṭwaʿ min yarāʿī

3b) You lived beside me with concealed emotions

And in my hand you were more obedient than my pen

3c) *You lived under my wing with concealed emotions*

*And in my hands you were more pliant than my pen*

استحى من لسانك لسان الافاعي

٤/ لكن من بعد ما بعدت عني

07:28 4a) Lākin min baʿid mā bʿidit ʿannī

[i]Staḥā min [i]lsānak [i]lsān[i]-l-ʿafāʿī (#)

4b) But after you went away from me

Embarrassed by your tongue were the tongues of vipers

4c) *But after you went away from me*

*Vipers would be shamed by your tongue's venom*

انا قواس النصر شقلة كواعي

٥/ اذا عالنصر جايي تمتحنّي

07:37 5a) ʿIzā ʿa-n-naṣir jāyī timtiḥinnī

ʿAnā [i]ʿwās[i]-n-naṣir shaʿlit<sup>82</sup> [i]kwāʿī

5b) If concerning victory you are coming to test me

I, the arch of triumph, my elbows hold it up

5c) *If it's about victory you've come here to test me*

*Know that triumphal arches are propped up on my elbows*

<sup>82</sup> Note that this word (*shaʿlit*) is a Lebanese colloquial words which means “the lifting of” or “to lift”

انوصل عمر الزمان بطول باعي

٦/ وكتر ما الدهر بالخيرة عجنّي

07:44 6a) [iW] kitir mā-d-dahir<sup>83</sup> bi-l-khubra ʿajannī

[i]Nwaʃal ʿumr[i]-z-zamān [i]bṭūl bāʿī

6b) And so much did Time with experience knead me

[that] the age of time got connected with the length of my arm span

6c) *Time kneaded into me so much experience*

*That the age of the universe is an extension of my arm span*

انا بحر وانت صدفة بقاعي

٧/ وشو بدك تغنى تا تغنى

07:52 7a) [iW] shū baddak [i]tghannī tā-t-tghannī

ʿAnā baḥr[i]-w-init ʃadfī bi-ʿāʿī

7b) What do you want to sing in order to sing

I am a sea and you are a shell in my seabed

7c) *Go ahead and sing, but what could you sing?*

*When I'm the sea and you're a shell on the floor of my sea*

طيفي بير عبك لو كنت نايم

٨/ وصرت عايش عا هاجس رعب مني

08:00 8a) [W] ʃirit<sup>84</sup> ʿāyish ʿā hajis rʿib minnī

Ṭayfī [i]b-yiriʿbak<sup>85</sup> law kinit nāyim

8b) And you've come to live in an anxiety of fear of me

The vision of me frightens you even if you are asleep

8c) *You've come to live in a constant state of fear*

*The vision of me terrifies you when asleep*

<sup>83</sup> Note that this word *d-dahir* (time; eternity) is repeated. It appeared earlier, in the second stanza, line 5, second hemistich.

<sup>84</sup> This is yet another repetition of “*ʃirit*” which appeared earlier in the first stanza in lines 5, 6, and 7.

<sup>85</sup> Note the complementary noun and verb of same root: *rʿib* (fear) and *yiriʿbak* (frightens you). The repetition of sounds and of words with related meanings stemming from the same root increases both the semantic and musical impact of the verse.

٩ / واسمي بير عبك لو كنت واعى

9a) [W] 'ismī bi-yri<sup>c</sup>bak law kinit wā<sup>c</sup>ī (#)

9b) And my name frightens you even if you are awake<sup>86</sup>

9c) And mere mention of my name terrifies you when awake

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<sup>86</sup> Note the game of opposites in the two final hemistiches. This is a useful strategy and gives rise to a large applause and laughter from the audience, especially since the parallel structure along with the rhyme scheme enables the listeners to anticipate the clincher line and they are able (and quite willing) to actually sing along with Mousa. This is very exciting for the audience as it allows them to participate in the action.

# Fifth Stanza [08:15 - 09:50]

ابتدا عا شبيتك يشفق شبابي

١/ أوخ، أوخ، شفت عا جبهتك مسحة كآبي

08:15 1a) Ōkh, Ōkh, (#) shifit ʿā jibihtak mashit kʿābī

[i]btadā ʿā shaybtak yishfuʿ shabābī (#)

1b) Owkh..owkh..I saw on your forehead a touch of sorrow

My youthfulness has begun feeling sorry for your graying

1c) *Owkh..owkh..I see a touch of sorrow there on your brow*

*My young years have begun to pity that gray hair of yours*

قبل ما يفلتوا عليهن ديابي

٢/ احتجز حملانك بقلب العمارة

08:30 2a) [i]Ḥtijiz ḥimlānak [i]b-ʿalb[i]-l-ʿimāra

ʿAbil mā yiflatū ʿlayhun [i]dyābī (#)

2b) Pen up your lambs inside the building

Before my wolves are let loose on them

2c) *Pen up your little lambs safe inside this building*

*Before my wolves are let loose on them*

مع الجوق الما بيضيّع اصابي

٣/ حتى يخبروا جوقك تبارى

08:39 3a) Ḥattā ykhabbirū jawʿak tabāra

Maʿ[ī]-j-jawʿ[ī]-l-mā biyḍayyiʿ ʿiṣābī

3b) So they can spread the news that your *jawqa* competed

With the *jawqa* that doesn't miss a mark

3c) *And for them to report that your jawqa competed*

*With the jawqa that never misses its mark*

08:47 4a) Baddak tiltijī-l-<sup>c</sup>azrā-l-<sup>c</sup>azāra

[W] titmarrad<sup>87</sup> <sup>c</sup>alā-ṭ-ṭīn[i]-t-turābī

4b) You need to take refuge in the Virgin of Virgins

And rebel against the earthen clay

4c) *You'll need to seek refuge from the Virgin of Virgins*

*And rebel against the very clay of your being*

ومن الجلود تستقرض صلابي

٥ / ومن البركان تستقرض حرارة

08:54 5a) [iW] min[i]-l-burkān tsta'riḍ ḥarāra

[W] min[i]-l-jalmūd tsta'riḍ ṣalābī

5b) And from the volcano [you need to] borrow<sup>88</sup> some heat

And from the boulder borrow some hardness

5c) *From the volcano you'll need to borrow some heat*

*And from the boulder you'll need to borrow some hardness*

<sup>87</sup> Repeated word. It was used earlier as part of the cognate accusative phrase “*tmarrad tmarrud*” in Line 13 of the Third Stanza, “He rebelled a rebellion...”

<sup>88</sup> Beginning with this line, the poet begins a list of things his opponent will need to “borrow” (*tsta'riḍ*) in order to be able to compete with him in the verbal duel. This listing strategy allows the poet to go on for a number of lines using a parallel structure and each time introducing new images that will draw a favorable reaction from the audience.



ومن السلطان تستقرض إهابي

- 09:01 6a) [iW] min[i]-s-sab<sup>c</sup>ayn tsta'riḍ jasāra  
6b) And from the two lions<sup>89</sup> borrow courage  
6c) *From the two lions borrow some courage*

وعا قلعة بينها وبينني قرابي

- 09:08 7a) [iW] min[i]-l-khiyyāl tsta'riḍ mahāra  
7b) And from the knight borrow skill  
7c) *And from the knight borrow some skill*

ببقى الدهر اوطى من ركابي

- 09:16 8a)[i]Nsarajt [i]d-dahir ḥattā tshinn ghāra  
8b) If you saddled Time so it could launch an attack  
8c) *If you were to put Time up on a saddle to launch an attack*

/٦/ ومن السبعين تستقرض جسارة

- [W] min[i]-s-silṭān tsta'riḍ 'ihābī  
And from the Sultan borrow gift-giving  
*And from the Sultan borrow some magnanimity*

/٧/ ومن الخيال تستقرض مهارة

- [W] 'ā 'al'a baynhā-w-baynī 'arābī  
And upon a citadel between it and me is a blood relationship  
*And in this citadel related to me by blood*

/٨/ انسرجت الدهر حتى تشن غارة

- B-yib'ā-d-dahir 'awṭā min [i]rkābī (#)  
Time would remain lower than my knees  
*Time wouldn't even come up to my knees*

<sup>89</sup> Mousa uses the dual ending here to fit the meter – another example of poetic license and a useful strategy for quick improvisation. The image of two lions also alludes to the symbolic portrayal of a pair of lions as symbols of power, courage, protection, and royalty.

09:26 9a) Ōkh, init muṭrib ma<sup>c</sup>ak jaw<sup>t</sup>it tijāra (#)

‘Usum kawras ‘usum ya<sup>c</sup>zif rabābī (#)

9b) *Owkh..you’re singer, you have with you a commercial jawqa*

One part is a chorus and another part plays the *rabāb* <sup>90</sup>

9c) *Ookh..you’re a mere singer crooning with your jawqa-for-hire*

One part is the chorus and the other plays the *rabāb*

عليك الاوف و"الباشا" الملحن

١٠/ واذا معجب بصوتك عن جدارة

09:36 10a) [W] ‘izā mu<sup>c</sup>jab bi-ṣawtak <sup>c</sup>an jadāra

<sup>c</sup>alayk-il-ōf w-il-Bāsha-l-mulahḥhin

10b) If you are enamored of your voice for its worthiness<sup>91</sup>

[Then] you take on the “Owf” and let al-Basha<sup>92</sup> the composer

10c) *If you are so enamored of your voice*

*Then go ahead and do the “Owf” but let al-Basha*

<sup>90</sup> *Rabāb* (or *rabābah*) is a traditional, simple bowed string instrument. It has a membrane belly and usually only two or three strings. Though valued for its voice-like tone, the *rabāb* has a very limited range. Mousa is making a jab at Zaghoul and his troupe by comparing their musicality to a primitive string instrument with limited range.

<sup>91</sup> Mousa is playing devil’s advocate here. He is well aware of Zaghoul’s fame as possessing one of the most beautiful singing voices and holding the record for the longest “Owf” melisma. In the clincher of this stanza Mousa acknowledges Zaghoul’s voice while simultaneously cutting him down to a hollow entertainer with no substance and no poetry-writing ability. Note also that the exact meaning of the phrase <sup>c</sup>*an jadāra* (out of worthiness) is unclear but necessary for the rhyme.

<sup>92</sup> The reference is to Tawfiq al-Basha (1924-2005) a great Lebanese composer and one of the “Gang of Five” composers whose musical genius was behind the legendary Baalbak International Festivals established in 1957. The “Gang of Five” included ‘Asi Rahbani, Mansur Rahbani, Zaki Nasif, Tawfiq al-Basha, and Tawfiq Sukkar, whose aim was to create authentically Lebanese music (Asmar).

١١ / عليه اللحن وعلينا الكتابي

11a) <sup>c</sup>Alayhi-l-laḥin-w-[i]<sup>c</sup>laynā-l-kitābī (#)

11b) Be responsible for the music and us be responsible for the writing

11c) *Compose the music and we will write the words*

## Sixth Stanza [09:51 - 10:49]

ولا تتألت فضيحة عا فضيحة

١/ استحي من البحر يا نبعة شحيحة

09:51 1a) [I]stihī mn-il-baḥir yā nab<sup>c</sup>a shḥīhā

Wa lā-t-tallit faḍīhā <sup>c</sup>ā faḍīhā

1b) Be ashamed by the sea, O [you] trickling/dried up spring

And don't triple disgrace upon disgrace

1c) *Cower before the sea, you dried-up spring*

*Don't triple your disgraces one after another*

بملوك العامية والفصيحة

٢/ العين مفتحة علينا بعنايي

10:03 2a) [I]l-<sup>c</sup>ayn [i]mfatṭha <sup>c</sup>alaynā bi-<sup>c</sup>ināyi

[i]B-mulūk-il-<sup>c</sup>āmmiyyi w-il-faṣīhā

2b) The eye/water source<sup>93</sup> is open on us with attention

By the kings of the vernacular and of classical Arabic

2c) *All eyes are watching us with scrutiny*

*The kings of the vernacular and the classical*

ولا خرج المباراة الصحيحة

٣/ انت بالشعر مش من مستوايي

10:11 3a) Init bi-sh-shi<sup>c</sup>r mush min mustawāyi

Wa lā kharj-il-mubārāt-i-ṣaḥīhā

3b) You in poetry are not of my caliber

And not suitable for a real match/competition

3c) *In poetry you are nowhere near my level*

*And have no place in a real match like this*

<sup>93</sup> The phrase [I]l-<sup>c</sup>ayn [i]mfatṭha <sup>c</sup>alaynā has a double-meaning. The primary meaning is “the eye is open on us” or “the eye is watching us,” referring to the audience and the judging panel’s careful scrutiny of their duel. The secondary meaning is “the water source is open to us,” which extends the image in the previous line when Mousa addressed Zaghloul as a “dried-up spring” with which Mousa’s troupe is now being contrasted.

٤ / انت بالتلفزة خرج الدعايي

للنينكس وباتا وصابون ريحة

10:18 4a) Init bi-t-talfazi kharj-d-di<sup>c</sup>āyi

L-n-Ninex w-Bāta<sup>94</sup> w-ṣābūn rīḥā (#)

4b) You on television are good for commercials

For Ninex and Bata and sweet-smelling soap

4c) *You're good for doing TV commercials*

*For Ninex and Bata and sweet-smelling soap*

٥ / وبعد ما كنت نهنتك كفايي

وعطيتك للهرب آخر نصيحة

10:29 5a) [W] ba<sup>c</sup>id mā kinit<sup>95</sup> nahnahtak<sup>96</sup> [i]kfāyi

[W] <sup>c</sup>aṭaytak li-l-harab ākhir naṣīḥā

5b) And after I pampered you plenty

And I gave you for escaping the final word of advice

5c) *After I've pampered you plenty*

*And advised you to flee*

<sup>94</sup> Poets always gain the audience's approval when they insert proper names and brand names as Mousa does here. Ninex is a tissue-paper brand and Bata is shoes. It is also interesting to note how he is able to fit such words into the musical and poetic meter.

<sup>95</sup> *Kinit* (I was) is a formulaic word that is often repeated or inserted to fill metrical space.

<sup>96</sup> In Ziadeh transcript = نبهتك *nabahtak*, literally "I warned you." On the recording it is نهنتك *nahnahtak*, literally "I pampered you". Both scan the same metrically.

10:36 6a) Bi ‘ayyi ‘alib yā Zaghlūl jāyi<sup>97</sup>

Ḳā shāḳir wasbit-i-n-nimr [i]b-ṭmūḩū

6b) With what heart, O Zaghloul, are you coming [here]

To a poet [who has] the pounce of the leopard in his yearnings

6c) *With what kind of heart, Zaghloul, are you coming here*

*To duel a poet with the pounce of a leopard in his flanks*

٧/ وَبَعَيْنُو غَضَبَةَ اللَّبْوَةِ الْجَرِيحَةِ

7a) [W] bi-ḳaynu ghaḩbit-il-labwi-j-jarīḩā (#)

7b) And in his eye the anger of a wounded lioness

7c) *And the anger of a wounded lioness in his eyes?*

<sup>97</sup> *jāyi* (I have come here, am coming here) is another example of a formulaic word.

# Seventh Stanza [10:50 – 11:53]

على التّطمين ببعثك رسالي

١/ وهلق يا أبو روكز الغالي

10:50 1a) [W] halla' yā Abū Rūkuz-il-ghālī x 2<sup>98</sup> (#)

<sup>c</sup>ala-t-taṭmīn<sup>99</sup> bib<sup>c</sup>atlak risālī

1b) And now, O cherished Abu Rukuz,<sup>100</sup>

To put you at ease I am sending you a letter

1c) *And now, most beloved Abu Rukuz,*

*To set your mind at ease, I am sending you a message*

بطانة تاجنا نجوم الليالي

٢/ لا تفزع تا يروح التاج منا

11:06 2a) Lā tifza<sup>c</sup> tā yrūḥ-it-tāj minnā

Bṭānit tājnā njūm-il-layālī (#)

2b) Do not be afraid that the crown will go from us

The lining of our crown is the stars of the nights

2c) *Have no fear of our losing the crown*

*Its very lining is the star-studded night*

<sup>98</sup> The hemistich is repeated.

<sup>99</sup> It is not idiomatic to use the preposition <sup>c</sup>ala (on) here in the phrase <sup>c</sup>ala-t-taṭmīn. The proper idiom uses li (for, in order to): li-t-taṭmīn, meaning “to put you at ease.” The poet uses <sup>c</sup>ala to fit the meter, an example of poetic license and a strategy that facilitates quick oral composition.

<sup>100</sup> Mousa is addressing his late mentor Rukuz, whose son is also named Rukuz, giving rise to the traditional nickname Abu Rukuz (Father of Rukuz).

سهرنا تا وصلنا للاعلي

٣/ اوخ..ومتل ما حكيت لما غبت عنا

11:17 3a) Ōkh..[w]mitil mā ḥkīt lammā ghibit °annā

[i]S-hirnā tā wšilnā lil-‘a°ālī

3b) Owkh..and as you said when you were absent from us

We stayed up until we reached the heights

3c) *Owkh...And as you said when you left us*

*We stayed up nights to reach the highest of heights*

عاحلام البطولي والبسالي

٤/ نام بفسحة الوادي تهنا

11:26 4a) Nām [i]bfas-ḥit-il-wādī t-hannā

°ā ‘aḥlām-il-buṭūlī wi-l-basālī<sup>101</sup>

4b) Sleep in the space of the valley take pleasure

On the dreams of heroism and courage

4c) *Sleep in bliss down there in the valley*

*And dream of valor and courage*

اسياد القلم والارتجالي

٥/ قطعنا الدرب وبقينا بوطنا

11:34 5a) ‘Aṭa°nā-d-darib w[i]b’īnā bwaṭannā

‘Asyād-il-‘alam [w]il-‘irtijālī

5b) We crossed the road and we remained in our homeland

Masters of the pen and improvisation

5c) *We’ve crossed the road and in our homeland will always be*

*The masters of the pen and improvisation too*

<sup>101</sup> Note the formulaic phrasing °ā ‘aḥlām-il-buṭūlī wa-l-basālī (On the dreams of heroism and courage). This same phrasing was used in the first stanza, line 9, second hemistich: °a ‘aḥlām il-‘asāwī w-il-līyūnī (On the dreams of harshness and softness).



من الشعّار ما بيضل إلا

٦/ واذا بيتغربلوا رجال المعنّى

11:41 6a) [W] ‘izā [i]b-yitgharbalū rjāl-il-ma<sup>c</sup>annā

Min-ish-shi<sup>cc</sup>ār ma b[i]-yḍall ‘illā

6b) And if they sift the men of *ma<sup>c</sup>annā*

From the poets the only ones to remain

6c) *And if they put the men of ma<sup>c</sup>annā through a sieve*

*The only poets who will remain*

٧/ انا وجريس وبطرس والفغالي

7a) ‘Anā-w-Jiryis-w-Buṭrus w-il-[i]Fghālī (#)

7b) I and Jiryis and Butrus and al-Faghali<sup>102</sup>

7c) *Are myself, Jiryis, Butrus, and Faghali*

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<sup>102</sup> It is customary for the *jawqa* leader to mention the names of the members of his *jawqa* in the *Iftitāḥiyyi* (Prelude) in this way, as a way of introducing them. Undoubtedly, Mousa based this stanza’s rhyme scheme on the name of his colleague al-Faghali which comes at the end. As Haydar has pointed out, poets compose their stanzas backwards, always with an eye for the final “clincher” whose rhyme adds to its strength and impact. Poets would do well to prepare a variety of stanzas based on the names of the poets in their own *jawqa* as well as opposing *jawqas*.

### 3.1.4. *Iftitāḥiyyi* of Mousa Zoghayb: Summary and Analysis

In his *Iftitāḥiyyi* Mousa Zoghayb delivers seven *qaṣīd* stanzas consisting of 11, 12, 20, 9, 11, 7, and 7 lines respectively, for a total of 77 lines. His *Iftitāḥiyyi* lasts approximately eleven minutes and fifty-three seconds; each line lasts an average of slightly more than 9 seconds. The specific rhyme endings he used are outlined as follows, where Rhyme a refers to the *ṣadr* and <sup>°</sup>*ajz* of *al-maṭla*<sup>°</sup> and <sup>°</sup>*ajz* rhymes of *al-dawr*, Rhyme b refers to the *ṣadr* rhymes of *al-dawr*, and Clincher rhyme refers to the *rujū*<sup>°</sup> rhyme of the closing single hemistich:

Stanza 1: Rhyme a = - <b>ūnī</b>	Rhyme b = - <b>ar</b>	Clincher = <b>ya<sup>°</sup>irfūnī</b> (they know me)
Stanza 2: Rhyme a = - <b>āra</b>	Rhyme b = - <b>annā</b>	Clincher = <b>safāra</b> (embassy)
Stanza 3: Rhyme a = - <b>ārū</b>	Rhyme b = - <b>ad</b>	Clincher = ' <b>intiṣārū</b> (his victory)
Stanza 4: Rhyme a = - <b>ā<sup>°</sup>ī</b>	Rhyme b = - <b>nnī</b>	Clincher = <b>wā<sup>°</sup>ī</b> (awake)
Stanza 5: Rhyme a = - <b>ābī</b>	Rhyme b = - <b>āra</b>	Clincher = <b>kitābī</b> (writing)
Stanza 6: Rhyme a = - <b>ihā</b>	Rhyme b = - <b>āyi</b>	Clincher = <b>jarīhā</b> (wounded)
Stanza 7: Rhyme a = - <b>ālī</b>	Rhyme b = - <b>nnā</b>	Clincher = <b>Fghālī</b> (Faghali)

It is clear that in most cases Rhyme a features a final long vowel **ā**, **ū**, or **ī**. These endings are indeed highly conducive to rhyming because they correspond to a variety of common suffixes.

In addition to the pronunciation of any word ending in long alif (ل) or alif maqṣūra (ى), the final long vowel **ā**, for example, corresponds to the Lebanese dialect pronoun suffix meaning “her” or “its” or possibly “their”/ “them.” The pronoun suffix (نا) *nā*, meaning “our” or “us” also ends in long vowel **ā**. The long vowel **ī** at the end of a word is very common, too, as it is the pronoun suffix (ي) -*ī* meaning “my” or the end of the pronoun suffix (ني) -*nī* meaning “me.” It is also the suffix (ي) -*ī* used to form a *nisba* or relative adjective such as *Libnānī* (Lebanese).

Furthermore, because the rhyme falls at the end of a line and thus completes a semantic clause, it

is natural for the poet to lengthen a final vowel that might otherwise be pronounced as short. In other words, poetic license allows short vowel endings to be treated as long vowels and thus be considered equivalent and acceptable rhymes. In the case of a short vowel ending of **a** or **i** arising from the presence of the feminine suffix *tā marbūṭa*<sup>103</sup> the short vowel will be extended to **ā** or **ī**, respectively. This means the poet can also fulfill the rhyme requirement of **ā** or **ī** with a feminine noun or adjective ending in *tā marbūṭa*. If the poet is using an “a rhyme” that ends in long **ū**, there are also several types of words and suffixes that enable him to find rhymes with ease. The long **ū** is a verb suffix for second and third person plural forms in both past and present tense in Lebanese dialect. The long **ū** is also the Lebanese dialect pronunciation of the pronoun suffix meaning “his” or “him.” Given all the possibilities and poetic license allowing the extension of short to long vowels, it is no wonder Mousa and other *zajal* poets employ rhymes ending in long vowels.

In the case of the Rhyme b choices in Mousa’s *Iftitāḥiyyi*, we find that only three of the seven stanzas employ a final long vowel, three employ short vowel endings, and two of his Rhyme b choices end in a consonant rather than a vowel (Stanza 1 = **-ar** and Stanza 3 = **-ad**). The decrease in rhymes ending in long vowels in the “b rhymes” owes to the fact that poets do not usually pause at the end of the first hemistich even though most hemistichs are complete clauses. The occasional enjambment across the separation between hemistichs often coincides

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<sup>103</sup> In Lebanese dialect, the feminine suffix *tā marbūṭa* will be pronounced as short vowel *fatha* (**a**) (as is the rule in *fushā*) or as short vowel *kasra* (**i**). In general, when the *tā marbūṭa* is preceded by an emphatic consonant such as *ṣād* or *ḥā’* it will end with *fatha* (as in *rkhīṣa* (cheap) or *mnīḥa* (good)) and when the *tā marbūṭa* is preceded by non-emphatic consonants such as *bā’* or *lām* it will end with *kasra* (as in *‘arābi* (blood tie) or *risāli* (a letter, message)).

with a “b rhyme” that ends on a consonant. This is the case as noted in Mousa’s *Ifitāhiyyi*, which occur in Stanzas 1 and 3 in which the b rhymes were **-ar** and **-ad**.

Arabic syntax rules are very flexible, an important characteristic that allows the poet to place rhyme words at the end of a hemistich without jarring the meaning beyond comprehension. Unlike English, which has a much stricter set of syntax rules compared to Arabic, it is equally acceptable to express a sentence containing a subject, verb, and object in the order V S O or S V O. For example, natural Arabic syntax begins with the verb and one might say, “Ate the boy the apple.” Alternatively and for grammatical reasons, for emphasis, or to draw attention to the subject of the verb, one might say, as in English, “The boy ate the apple.” In the case of poetry, it would be acceptable as well to say, “The apple the boy ate [it],” or even “The apple/ ate [it]/ the boy,” without losing the sense of the intended meaning. This flexibility in syntax is a necessary linguistic characteristic that makes it possible for poets to correctly place rhyme words with ease.

Already at this point in the *zajal* performance we are able to see numerous aspects of oral-formulaic composition at work. The rhyme choices that take advantage of Arabic’s inflected nature are formulaic, what Parry and Lord termed a formulaic “system” into which the poet can easily substitute a large variety of words that will automatically fit the poetic mold (Lord 30-67). Playing with syntax to serve purposes of rhyme and meter is also part of the oral-formulaic procedure in which metrical chunks are placed strategically like the pieces of a puzzle to form acceptable lines. I have also pointed out (in footnotes) a number of specific words (formulas) that are often repeated by Mousa (and as we will see by other *zajal* poets), such as *širit* (I became), *kinit* (I was), *ad-dahr* (time eternal), *al-ḥilm* (the dream), *zajal*, and *ma‘annā*, and stock constructions such as the comparative phrases used by Mousa in his first and third stanzas (“shorter than the dream that...”; “smaller than those who...”; “colder than ice...”; “sturdier than

the fortress...”) Listing strategies, in which a poet begins or frames a series of lines using the same word, such as in Mousa’s fifth stanza when he delivers a series of lines revolving around the word *tsta’riḍ* (to borrow) and lists all the items Zaghloul will need to borrow to be able to compete with him, are also formulaic rhetorical devices that enable a poet to improvise quickly while maintaining rhyme and meter with ease. Conditional phrases are another favorite strategy often employed by poets to facilitate oral composition not only of numerous lines, but to create a crescendo of ideas and images leading up to a clincher, as in the conclusion of Mousa’s final *Ifṭitāḥiyyi* stanza that begins with the conditional proposition, “And if they put the men of *ma<sup>ʿ</sup>annā* through a sieve...” Another favorite strategy, which is part and parcel of the oral-formulaic method of composition, is the pairing of synonyms, as in Mousa’s second stanza *ʿadwa-w-marāra* (enmity and bitterness), or the pairing of opposites, as in Mousa’s first stanza *ʿa<sup>ʿ</sup>ahlām il-ʿasāwī w-il-liyūnī* (On the dreams of harshness and softness). Poets also draw on Arabic morphology patterns and use the strategy of pairing words with shared roots to enhance both the semantic impact and the musicality of their verses, as in Mousa’s third stanza *tamarrad* (verb) *tamarrud* (gerund), literally “rebelled a ...rebellng”. Formulas also abound in thematic content, especially here in the *Ifṭitāḥiyyi* segment. The names of places, people, historical figures, and *zajal* poets past and present are poured into the mix as essential ingredients and are spiced up with allusions to current events and popular topics of the day. Indeed, all *zajal* encounters are date-stamped thanks to these thematic formulas.

Before moving to Zaghloul’s *Ifṭitāḥiyyi* segment, a few words on audience reaction are in order. A verbal duel is a competition, after all, and the poet’s primary goal from beginning to end is to endear himself to the audience and gain its favor. One way to gauge his success is to listen to the background sounds coming from the *riddādi* (chorus, literally “group of

repeaters/responders”) and the audience. Tambourines, drums, whistles, shouts, ululations, and laughter can be heard in various degrees. These sounds are an essential and integral component of the verbal duel. I have indicated instances of audience and chorus response in the transcription line using the symbol (#). One easy generalization to be made is that there is always an audible response from the audience at the end of a stanza. This, of course, is a natural place for applause, but it is also directly related to the composition process. According to Haydar, poets construct stanzas with the final clincher rhyme as a starting point and mentally work backwards to the lines leading up to it (“The Development of Lebanese *Zajal*” 208). The result is that every line, with its fixed rhyme ending, helps build energy and momentum that is released in the clincher. In many cases, the combination of semantic expectations and well-established end rhyme makes it possible for the audience to anticipate part or all of the clincher hemistich when it comes. The joy of recognition, of having expectations fulfilled and of being able to sing along with the poet, is what is expressed by the audience and vocalized in the form of singing, shouting, ululating, laughing, and clapping. These are moments when the audience becomes one with the poet and is able to share in the joy of the creative process.

The audience also responds positively to Mousa whenever he jabs at Zaghloul. Any type of attack on the opponent is met with strong approval and bursts of laughter. The crowd is also impressed by Mousa’s knowledgeability, especially in his list of names out of *zajal* history. And they also like it when he mentions familiar places and events, things with which they can identify and to which they can relate. They also respond to striking imagery and craftily-formed lines and stanzas that put Mousa’s strength as a poet on display.

### 3.1.5. *Ifitāḥiyyi* of Zaghoul al-Damour: Background

Now that Mousa has completed his *Ifitāḥiyyi* segment, it is time for Zaghoul to take his place on the stage. As mentioned earlier, this particular day in Zaghoul's life is a difficult and sorrowful one. He arrives at Beit Mery coming directly from his dear brother's deathbed. On the recording, Mousa's *Ifitāḥiyyi* concludes at the 11:53 mark. The *riddādi* (instrumental chorus) claps and plays tambourine and beats the *dirbakki* drums while making vocal outbursts until Zaghoul begins his *Ifitāḥiyyi* at the 12:48 mark.

### 3.1.6. *Iftitāḥiyyi* of Zaghoul al-Damour: Transcript, Transliteration, Trot, and Translation

#### First Stanza [12:48-13:53]

	إذا ما بعمل الواجب علي	١/ آخ.. اعذرني يا حروف الابجدي
12:48	1a) Ākh.. Ākh <sup>104</sup> (#) I <sup>ʿ</sup> zurīnī yā ḥirūf-il-‘abjadiyyī	‘Izā mā ba <sup>ʿ</sup> mil-il-wājib ‘alayyī (#)
	1b) Aakh... Ākh Forgive me, O letters of the alphabet	If I do not fulfill my responsibility
	1c) <i>Aakh... Aakh Forgive me, O letters of the alphabet</i>	<i>If I am unable to fulfill my duties</i>

<sup>104</sup> Zaghoul opens with a heart wrenching “*Owf*” that lasts a full 12 seconds. It elicits a fervent echo from the chorus. He, too, pronounces the “*Owf*” with a final “*kh*” rather than “*f*” (as Mousa did) but he also pronounces the long vowel as “*Ākh*” rather than “*Owkh*.” This expression, “*Ākh*” is the word “*Akh*” (brother) with an extended opening vowel. In Arabic, when a person is in pain, he or she cries “*Ākh*” as if to call out to his or her brother for help. In this particular situation, Zaghoul’s long, heartfelt, melismatic “*Ākh*” takes on special meaning since, as was noted earlier, he has just lost his brother only a matter of hours before the duel begins. Just as Mousa had seemed worried Zaghoul would do (as evidenced in Mousa’s attack on Zaghoul’s singing voice and in particular trying to trivialize the importance of a well-sung “*Owf*”) Zaghoul starts his *Iftitāḥiyyi* with a powerful and emotional cry that immediately draws in the audience and judges. As Zaghoul continues to deliver his opening lines, he showcases his beautiful singing voice by extending long vowels with lengthy and melodious melisma and the timbre of his voice reveals sincere grief and occasionally breaks as on the verge of tears. Note also that it is clear from the opening hemistich that the rhyme scheme is set up for the final word in the stanza, “*khayyī*” (my brother). Indeed, Zaghoul repeats the word *khayyī* four times in this short stanza.



وعليي، مثل امي ومثل بيبي

٢/ خسرت خيي المفضل علولادي

13:14 2a) [i]Khsirit khayyī-li-mufḍil ʿā-wlādī

W-ʿalayyī...<sup>105</sup>, mitil ʿimmī w mitil bayyī (#)

2b) I lost my brother the bestower of benefits to my children

And to myself...Like my mother and like my father

2c) *I lost my brother, who gave so generously to my children*

*And to me...Like my mother and my father*

ما حلّو يبتدي النسيان فيي

٣/ خمس ساعات صر لو مش زيادي

13:28 3a) Khamis sāʿāt ṣar lū mish [i]zyādī

Mā ḥallu yibtidī-n-nisyān fīyyī

3b) Five hours have passed on him not more

It hasn't been long enough for forgetfulness to start in me

3c) *He has been gone five hours, not more*

*Now is not the time for me to start forgetting*

<sup>105</sup> This melisma lasts a full 3 seconds, emphasizing “me”.

لاني بعتر كل شخص منكن

٤/ بعزا خيي رجعت عزي فؤادي

13:38 4a) [i]B-<sup>ˤ</sup>azā khayyī rji<sup>ˤ</sup>it <sup>ˤ</sup>azzī fu’ādī

Li’annī b<sup>ˤ</sup>itibir kill shakhiṣ minkun<sup>106</sup>

4b) At my brother’s mourning ceremony I consoled my heart, too Because I consider each one of you

4c) *But after mourning my brother I consoled my own heart Because I consider each one of you*

٥/ بعد ما غاب خيي محل خيي

5a) Ba<sup>ˤ</sup>d mā ghāb khayyī mḥall khayyī (#)

5b) After my brother left, in the place of my brother

5c) *Now that my brother is gone, to be my brother*

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<sup>106</sup> Ziadeh writes منكم (*minkum*), using the *Fuṣḥa* spelling of the object pronoun “you (plural)” rather than its counterpart منكن (*minkun*) in Lebanese dialect.

## Second Stanza [13:58-15:07]

	انا ابنك وانت بتعرفيني	١/ ويا قلعة بيت مري الما بتجهليني
13:58	1a) [iW] ya ‘al <sup>c</sup> it Bat Miri-l-ma b-tijhalīnī	‘Anā ‘ibnik [i]w-‘intī b-ta <sup>c</sup> irfīnī...(#)
	1b) O citadel of Beit Mery who isn’t ignorant of me	I am your son and you know me
	1c) <i>O Citadel of Beit Mery who is not ignorant of me</i>	<i>I am your native son and you know me well</i>
	ونقلني من مديني عا مديني	٢/ حملني والدي من الشوف خلعة
14:10	2a) Ḥimilnī wāldī min-i-sh-shūf khil <sup>c</sup> a	[W] na’alnī min madīni <sup>c</sup> a madīni <sup>107</sup> (#)
	2b) My father carried me from Shouf [as] an infant <sup>108</sup>	And transported me from city to city
	2c) <i>My father carried me as a baby from the Shouf mountains</i>	<i>And took me from city to city</i>

<sup>107</sup> The repetition of the word *madīni* (city) in this common idiom *min madīni <sup>c</sup>a madīni* (from city to city) adds to its musicality and is another example of word choices the audience can predict, allowing them to participate in singing.

<sup>108</sup> Zaghloul is reminding the audience that he is no stranger to Beit Mery and that he is from the beautiful Shouf region that comprises the Christian town of Damour, part of Zaghloul’s penname, Zaghloul al-Damour (Baby Dove of Damour).

تا شفت الشمس اوطى من جبيني

٣/ خلقت بجديدتك وطلعت طلعة

14:22 3a) [i]Khli't bi-jdaydtik<sup>109</sup> w-ṭla<sup>c</sup>it ṭal<sup>c</sup>a<sup>110</sup>

Ta shift-i-sh-shams 'awṭā min [i]jbīnī (#)

3b) I was born in your “jdeidi”<sup>111</sup> and climbed a great climbing

Until I saw the sun lower than my forehead<sup>112</sup>

3c) *I was born in your town and climbed high*

*So high the sun was below my brow*

∞

<sup>109</sup> Ziadeh's transcript has جيرتك *jīrtik* (your environs) rather than جديدتك *jdaydtik* (your town).

<sup>110</sup> The pairing of these two words stemming from the same root, *ṭla<sup>c</sup>it* (I went up) and *ṭal<sup>c</sup>a* (a climbing; a hill), add again to the musicality of the hemistich. Moreover, this is an example of the grammatical construction “cognate accusative” which Mousa used in Line 13 of his third opening stanza. The combination has the effect of emphasizing the verb's action.

<sup>111</sup> Zaghoul is referring to Jdeidet el-Metn, his hometown in Damour. Many Lebanese towns and villages have the prefix “Jdeidet” and thus it carries the sense of “Town of” or “Area of” or possibly “Suburb of.”

<sup>112</sup> Note that Mousa used this formulaic idiom previously in Line 8 of his fifth stanza: ‘awṭā min [i]rkābī (lower than my knees.)

مشوا خواريف عا شمالي ويميني

14:30 4a) [iW] min-i-sh-sha<sup>cc</sup>ār kam shal<sup>c</sup>ā bi-shal<sup>c</sup>a

4b) And of poets how many flock after flock<sup>113</sup>

4c) *And many a poet, flock after flock,*

عطيتي للتحداني بعريني

14:40 5a) Ya ‘al<sup>c</sup>it Bat Miri law ‘alif bal<sup>c</sup>a<sup>115</sup>

5b) O Citadel of Beit Mery even if a thousand gulps

5c) *O Castle of Beit Mery, even if you gave a thousand gulps*

٤/ ومن الشعار كم شلعة بشلعة

Mishū khwārīf<sup>c</sup>a shmālī w-yamīnī (#)

Walked [like] sheep to my left and to my right<sup>114</sup>

*Passed like sheep to my left and to my right*

٥/ يا قلعة بيت مري لو الف بلعة

‘Aṭaytī lil-it-taḥaddānī b‘arīnī...(#)

You were to give to those who dared me in my lair

*Of courage to those who would dare me in my lair*

<sup>113</sup> Another example of immediate repetition of a word adding a sing-song element to the verse: *shal<sup>c</sup>ā bi-shal<sup>c</sup>a* (flock after flock). Note also that the word *shal<sup>c</sup>ā* is not a *fuṣḥā* word.

<sup>114</sup> Audience can easily sing along with this predictable idiom of lexical opposites that fits the rhyme: *‘a shmālī w- yamīnī* (to my left and to my right).

<sup>115</sup> Note the internal rhyme: *‘al<sup>c</sup>a* (citadel) and *bal<sup>c</sup>a* (gulp)

٦/ تا خلي الصوت من قلعة لقلعة

يدوي مثل قنبلة الفجرها

14:51 6a) Ta khalli-ṣ-ṣawt min ‘al<sup>c</sup>ā li-‘al<sup>c</sup>ā

Yidwī mitil ‘inbilt-il-fajarhā

6b) In order to let the voice from citadel to citadel<sup>116</sup>

Explode like the bomb that was blown up by

6c) *I would let my voice ring out from castle to castle*

*Exploding like the bomb*

٧/ الاميركاني بهيروشيما الحزيني

7a) L-‘Amirkānī b-Hirūshīma-l-ḥazīnī (#)

7b) The American on sad<sup>117</sup> Hiroshima

7c) *The Americans dropped on sad Hiroshima*

<sup>116</sup> Another example of repetition: *min ‘al<sup>c</sup>ā li-‘al<sup>c</sup>ā* (from citadel to citadel)

<sup>117</sup> Here Zaghloul draws our attention back to his state of grief by ending on the rhyme word “ḥazīnī” (sad). However, he has branched out into the larger sphere by mentioning the horrific event and human catastrophe of Hiroshima, thus taking himself into the universal realm of human suffering and taking the duel outside Lebanon to a wider geographic sphere.

### Third Stanza [15:09-16:13]

الحكم بين القساوي والليوني

١ / ويا سنة الواحد وسبعين كوني

15:09 1a) [iW] Yā sint-il-wāḥad-w-sab<sup>c</sup>īn kūnī

L-ḥakam bayn-il-‘asāwī w-il-liyūnī<sup>118</sup>

1b) O year of nineteen-seventy-one, be

The judge between harshness and softness

1c) *O year of nineteen-seventy-one, you be*

*The judge between harshness and tenderness*

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<sup>118</sup> Zaghloul is using the exact phrasing used by Mousa in his first stanza, line 9, second hemistich: *‘a ‘aḥlām il-‘asāwī w-il-liyūnī*. This also means he will be using the same end rhyme Mousa used in his opening stanza. This strategy is something akin to political spin whereby one rival takes the exact words of his opponent and finds a way to turn them against him. In this case, Zaghloul seems to be equating Mousa with harshness (*il-‘asāwī*) and himself with softness (*il-liyūnī*), that is, the bad versus the good. Needless to say, this repetition and idiom of lexical opposites, again allows the audience to predict and participate in the singing of the line.

15:18 2a) 'Is-harī ʿā jaw't-il-marḥūm maʿnā

Mitil ma b-tis-har-il-imm-il-ḥanūnī (#)

2b) Stay up late<sup>119</sup> with the *jawqa* of the deceased<sup>120</sup> with usJust as the affectionate mother<sup>121</sup> stays up late2c) *Stay up late with us, tending to our dear deceased's jawqa**Just as the tender-hearted mother spends the nights awake*

15:28 3a) [iW] Yā Mūsā baʿidma-l-“mishrif” jamaʿnā

[W] ʿaṭaynākun ʿa ʿashr [i]-sh-hūr mūnī...<sup>122</sup> (#)3b) And Mousa, after “al-Mishrif”<sup>123</sup> brought us together

And we gave you all ten months' worth of provisions

3c) *And Mousa, after we got together at “al-Mishrif”**And we stocked you up with ten months' worth of provisions*

<sup>119</sup> Again Zaghoul repeats a word used more than once by Mousa in his opening lines: *'Is-harī* (Stay up late). Zaghoul is addressing the year 1971.

<sup>120</sup> The deceased is Rukuz who everyone in the audience knows was also Zaghoul's dear friend and colleague in *zajal*.

<sup>121</sup> With this reference to “the affectionate mother” Zaghoul establishes some metaphorical connections. First, he is reusing Mousa's previously sung words and images to his own advantage (Mousa conjured the image of the mother staying up late over the cradle in his opening lines). Second, the way the line is expressed, this “affectionate mother” is equated with “us” from the previous hemistich. Thus, Zaghoul has turned Mousa's image into an opportunity to equate himself with “the affectionate mother,” the ideal image of love and affection and further emphasizes his personal suffering having now lost his brother who was like a father.

<sup>122</sup> Zaghoul's long melisma here draws applause from the audience.

<sup>123</sup> The last encounter between Mousa and Zaghoul took place ten months earlier in al-Mishrif, a town in the Shouf district.



اطلبوني يا يتامى بتوجدوني

٤/ موني..الموني خلصت ونحنا رجعنا

15:40 4a) Mūnī<sup>124</sup>...l-mūnī khilṣit w-niḥnā rji<sup>c</sup>nā

[i]ṭlubūnī<sup>125</sup> yā yatāmā b-tūjadūnī (#)

4b) The provisions are depleted and we have returned

Ask for me, O orphans, and you will find me<sup>126</sup>

4c) *The provisions are all used up and we have returned*

*Ask for me, poor orphans, and you will find me*

البسونا بصدركن قوني وقوني

٥/ اشبعوا نحنا قبل منكن شبعنا

15:48 5a) [i]Shba<sup>c</sup>ū niḥnā ‘abil minkun shbi<sup>c</sup>nā

Lbisūnā b-ṣidirkun ‘ūnī-w-‘ūnī (#)

5b) Satisfy yourselves we before you satiated ourselves

Wear us on your chest, icon and icon<sup>127</sup>

5c) *Satisfy yourselves, we filled up long before you*

*Wear us on your breast like a chain of icons*

<sup>124</sup> The repetition of *mūnī* (provisions) is an allowable pausing strategy that also gives the poet a chance to show off his singing voice, which Zaghoul also enhances with a long and beautiful melisma which again draws applause from the audience.

<sup>125</sup> Note the gratuitous extra rhyme word ‘*Uṭlubūnī* (Ask for me). Considering Zaghoul is reusing Mousa’s end rhyme in this stanza, he is clearly showing off by throwing in extra rhymes this way.

<sup>126</sup> A Christ-like image, to which Zaghoul is connecting himself.

<sup>127</sup> Once again Zaghoul uses sing-song repetition on the rhyme with the phrase ‘*ūnī-w-‘ūnī* (icon and icon). Note also the additional Christian image of the icon, suggesting that Zaghoul and his *jawqa* are like saints to be venerated by Mousa and his *jawqa*.

اعتدتوا ناكلوني بليل اعمى

٦/ احصدوا نحنا كرامتك زرعنا

15:58 6a) [i]Ḥṣudū niḥnā karāmitkun zara<sup>c</sup>nā

[i]<sup>c</sup>tadtū tāklūnī b-layl ‘a<sup>c</sup>mā

6b) Reap, we your honor/vineyards<sup>128</sup> planted

You’ve gotten used to eating me in a blind night

6c) *Go ahead and reap the harvest of honor we planted for you    You’ve all gotten used to feeding on me in the dark of night*

٧/ وعلى صياح الديوك بتكروني

7a) [W] <sup>c</sup>ala ṣyāḥ-id-diyūk [i]b-tinikrūnī (#)

7b) And on the crowing of the roosters you deny me<sup>129</sup>

7c) *And denying me as soon as the cocks begin to crow*

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<sup>128</sup> The primary meaning of *karāmitkun* is “your honor” or “your dignity.” It can also mean “for your sake.” Also, when coupled with the verb *zara<sup>c</sup>nā* (we planted/sowed/cultivated) which comes at the end of the hemistich, the related word *karm* (pl. *kurūm*), meaning “vineyard” is also conjured by the syntax. Either way, Zaghloul is claiming to have sown the seeds of Mousa’s livelihood and success as a poet of *zajal* and implies that Mousa still depends on Zaghloul for sustenance in that domain.

<sup>129</sup> Zaghloul makes a clear reference to Christ being denied by Peter, his dearest disciple. Thus it appears that the previous hints at Christian imagery were all leading up to this clincher ending which equates Zaghloul with Christ and Mousa with Peter’s denial. Large applause is heard.

#### Fourth Stanza [16:16- 17:16]

ضروري تناصروا موسى علي

١/ ويا انصار الزجل والعقري

16:16 1a) [iW] yā anṣār-iz-zajal<sup>130</sup> w-il-ʿabʿariyyī

Ḍarūrī tnāṣrū Mūsā ʿalayyī

1b) O supporters of *zajal* and creativity/genius

It is necessary to support/give Mousa the victory<sup>131</sup> over me

1c) *O supporters of zajal and ingenuity*

*You should give Mousa all your support over me*

تا يوصل عالسموات العلية

٢/ لأنو بعد بدو كثير يطلع

16:27 2a) Li-ʿannū baʿid baddū ktīr yiṭlaʿ

Ta yūṣal ʿa-s-samāwāt-il-ʿaliyyī (#)

2b) Because he still needs a lot to rise up

To reach the high heavens

2c) *Because he still has a long, long way to go*

*Before reaching these heavenly heights*

<sup>130</sup> Ziadeh's transcript gives انصار الشعر *anṣār ish-shiʿr* (supporters of poetry) rather than انصار الزجل *anṣār iz-zajal* (supporters of *zajal*).

<sup>131</sup> Note that the word *anṣār* (supporters) of the previous hemistich and this word *tnāṣrū* (give victory to) share the same root. It is once again Zaghloul's way of showing his linguistic ad poetic acumen and emphasizing the message he is delivering.

16:37 3a) Ḍarūrī tza'fūlū b-kill maṭla<sup>c</sup>

Ḍarūrī yshūf janbū il-'aktariyyī

3b) It is necessary for you to clap for him after each *maṭla*<sup>c</sup>

It is necessary<sup>132</sup> for him to see next to him the majority

3c) *You should clap for him after each opening hemistich*

*And he should feel he has the majority on his side*

16:45 4a) Ḍarūrī ʿā ʿyūnū-ḍ-ḍaww yiṭla<sup>c</sup>

Ṣalāt-iṣ-ṣibiḥ ʿafḍal min ʿashiyyī (#)

4b) It is necessary that on his eyes the light rises (morning comes)

Prayer in the morning is better than at night<sup>133</sup>

4c) *It is important for his eyes to see the dawn*

*Morning prayer is better than at night*

<sup>132</sup> Note Zaghoul's repetition of the word *Ḍarūrī* (It is necessary that). The repetition, which is another manifestation of oral formulaic composition, allows Zaghoul to build a crescendo of lines quickly and easily and to simultaneously emphasize the notion that "It is necessary" to let Mousa win, the way a parent might let a child win a game to build his confidence. In other words, Zaghoul is patronizing Mousa and implying that any points he might gain are merely the result of letting him win or that it is okay to help Mousa the *amateur* gain confidence, because he needs all the help he can get to be able to compete with Zaghoul.

<sup>133</sup> Note that Mousa can be heard responding to Zaghoul with the expression "'āḥ" here, literally, "Great," by which he means, "Okay. Let's go. I'll show you."

16:55 5a) Anā nāṭir khamīr-ish-shi<sup>c</sup>ir yiṭla<sup>c</sup>

Ma raḥ bifṭar <sup>c</sup>ala li'mī ṭariyyī

5b) I am waiting for the yeast of poetry to rise

I will not break the fast on a tender morsel

5c) *I am waiting for the yeast of poetry to rise*

*I won't break the fast on a tender morsel*

17:01 6a) [W] 'izā khil'ī <sup>c</sup>alā Mūsā byiṭla<sup>c</sup><sup>134</sup>

Ta 'ihdum ṭūr Mūsā <sup>c</sup>a Ḥarājil

6b) And if my ire on Mousa rises up

Then I will topple the Mountain of Mousa (i.e. Moses) upon Harajil<sup>135</sup>

6c) *And if I get fed up with Moses over here*

*I'll bring Moses' whole mountain down upon Harajil*

<sup>134</sup> With the exception of line 3, Zaghoul is using the exact word *yiṭla<sup>c</sup>* (rise) as the *ṣadr* rhyme word throughout this stanza. He does this to show his skill at using the same word to mean something new each time in a game of homonyms. In two cases, Zaghoul makes use of common idioms: *yiṭla<sup>c</sup> id-ḍaww* (literally, the light rises; figuratively, dawn breaks or the sun comes up) and *yiṭla<sup>c</sup> khil'ī* (literally, my physical constitution/essence rises; figuratively, I get fed up or My ire rises). In both cases, the syntax has been reversed in order to place the rhyme word *yiṭla<sup>c</sup>* at the end of the hemistich.

<sup>135</sup> This is a particularly witty and powerful line. Mousa is the Arabic version of the name Moses and here Zaghoul is referring to the Biblical Moses and is saying he will topple the Mountain of Moses (i.e. where Moses went to get the Ten Commandments) down on the town of Harajil, Mousa Zoghayb's hometown in the Mount Lebanon region. With this name game, Zaghoul also associates Mousa with the Jewish people by analogy. He gets a large applause from the audience.

٧/ وقبل (يارينغ) انهيلو القضية

7a) [W] ‘abil Yāring ‘inhīlū-l-‘aḍiyyī (#)

7b) And before Jarring<sup>136</sup> I will end the matter for him

7c) *And finish him off before Jarring comes to save him*

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<sup>136</sup> The reference is to Swedish diplomat Gunnar Jarring who was appointed by the UN Secretary-General U Thant as a special envoy for the Middle East peace process (1967-73), which was called the “Jarring Mission,” and his methods were in use at the time of the Beit Mery verbal duel in 1971. *Zajal* poets often bring current events into their duels, which serves the purpose of showing they are erudite and up-to-date on worldly matters. This strategy also brings the audience into the conversation as all are concerned with and affected by social and political happenings of the day.

## Fifth Stanza [17:19- 18:39]

ختم موسى علي مش بعيدي

١/ واذا بالمشرف بأخر قصيدي

17:19 1a) [iW] ‘izā bil-Mishrif [i]b-‘ākhīr ‘aṣīdī

Khatam Mūsā ‘alayyī mish [i]b‘īdī

1b) And if at Mishrif with the last poem

Mousa ended on me (i.e. had the last word) it's not far off

1c) *And so what if with the final qaṣīd at Mishrif*

*Mousa got the last word, it's not a stretch to say*

وعا ذوقو بلش يصف الجريدي

٢/ انا تنازلت عن حقي وعطينو

17:28 2a) ‘Anā tnāzalt ‘an ḥa’ī w-‘aṭaytū

[W] ‘a zaw’ū ballash yiṣiff-il-jarīdī (#)

2b) I surrendered what I had a right to and gave it to him<sup>137</sup>

And according to his whims he started setting the newspaper<sup>138</sup>

2c) *That I let him have what was rightfully mine*

*But he fabricated the news story according to his whims*

<sup>137</sup> At the last encounter between Zaghoul and Mousa, Mousa gave the closing *qaṣīd*. However, Zaghoul is saying here that even though the normal protocol would have been for Zaghoul to deliver the closing *qaṣīd*, he generously gave the honor to Mousa. In the second hemistich Zaghoul states that Mousa misinterpreted that as a coup when really Zaghoul was just being magnanimous.

<sup>138</sup> i.e. interpreting things how he liked and publicizing his version of the story

17:38 3a) [W] ʿinidma b-ʿākhīr-il-jawlī laʾaytū

ʿAm yidabdib mitil ṭiflī waḥīdī

3b) And when at the end of the round I found him

Crawling around like a (female) baby all alone

3c) *And at the end of the round when I saw him**Crawling around like an abandoned baby girl*

لقيت الضرب اعلی من الطريدي

٤/ عصرت دماط عاطفتي وسقيتو

17:46 4a)[i] ʿṣarīt dammāt ʿāṭifī w-sʾaytū

Laʾayt-iḍ-ḍarīb ʿaghlā min-i-ṭrīdī (#)

4b) I wrung out the blood of my sympathy and gave him to drink

I found that hitting was more expensive than the prey<sup>139</sup>4c) *I squeezed out the blood of compassion and gave him to drink**And discovered the bullet was worth more than the prey*

وشمخ بو الحن بجناحو النبيدي

٥/ اوف. اوف.. نفخ حالو عند ما انكب زيتو

17:58 5a) Ōf.. Ōf..Nafakh ḥālū ʿinidma<sup>140</sup>-n-kabb zaytū...

[W] shamakh bū-l-ḥinn bi-jnāḥū [i]n-nbīdī (#)

5b) Owf..Owf..He puffed himself up when his oil was spilled<sup>141</sup>

And paraded around, a robin with wine-colored wings

5c) *Owf.Owf.Even though his oil was spilled he puffed himself up**Fluttering about like a robin with wine-colored wings*

<sup>139</sup> Zaghoul is saying that the round of ammunition necessary to kill him was more expensive than Mousa himself, in other words, the bullet was more valuable than the prey he could kill with it; it wasn't worth shooting him.

<sup>140</sup> In Ziadeh's transcript ʿinidma (when) is given as بعدما baʿdma (after).

<sup>141</sup> The common idioms “inkabb zaytū” (his oil was spilled) and “khiliṣ zaytū” (his oil was all used up) mean “He's finished,” or even, “He died.”



مثل مطرب بايام الحصيدي

٦/ وبدي يعرّم على اطفال بيتو

18:10 6a) [iW] bidi-y<sup>c</sup>arrim <sup>c</sup>alā ‘aṭfāl baytū

Mitil muṭrib bi-‘iyyām-il-ḥaṣīdī (#)

6b) And he started heaping [himself] up on the children of his house

Like a singer<sup>142</sup> in the days of harvest

6c) *He started bragging before the children of his household*

*Like a singer at harvest time*

عاهالحفلة، عاهالعركة الجديدي

٧/ وتايثخلص من غرورو دعيّو

18:18 7a) [iW] ta yitkhallaṣ min [i]ghrūrū da<sup>c</sup>aytū

<sup>c</sup>a ha-l-ḥaflī, <sup>c</sup>a ha-l-<sup>c</sup>arkī –ij-jdīdī

7b) And in order for him to get rid of his vanity I invited him

To this party, to this new battle

7c) *And to help him get over his vanity I invited him*

*To this party, to this new battle*

<sup>142</sup> Zaghoul again uses a word, *muṭrib*, (singer/entertainer) used earlier by Mousa in Line 9 of his Fifth opening stanza: *Ōkh, init muṭrib ma<sup>c</sup>ak jaw’it tijāra* (Ookh..you’re a mere singer crooning with your *jawqa*-for-hire). In this way, Zaghoul returns the favor to Mousa, calling him a mere *muṭrib* also. The image of a singer at harvest time is an interesting one. We can view the singer as being in a precarious situation; he can sing during harvest time, but what about the rest of the year? Also, the singer can be seen as lazy; he sings while others labor, doesn’t deserve credit for the bounty.

18:26 8a) ‘Ish-hadū ‘lāyyī-w-‘a ha-l-ḥakī-l-ḥkaytū

‘ā ‘īdī tiḥram [i]dfūf-il-[i]ma‘annā

8b) Bear witness to me and to the speaking I have spoken<sup>143</sup>

On my hand<sup>144</sup> be forbidden the tambourines of *ma‘annā*<sup>145</sup>

8c) *Bear witness, everyone, to the words I have spoken*

*And let my hands be forbidden from tapping the tambourine*

٩ / اذا ما ببؤس المغرور ايدي

9a) ‘Izā ma-b-bawwis-il-maghrūr ‘īdī (#)

9b) If I don’t make the vain one kiss my hand

9c) *If I don’t make this conceited fool kiss my hand*

<sup>143</sup> Again Zaghoul uses a pair of cognates for emphasis and for the musicality of the repeated sounds: *ha-l-ḥakī-l-ḥkaytū* (this speaking I have spoken).

<sup>144</sup> This is another instance of an extra rhyme word added at the beginning of the hemistich (rather than the end). It is also the same word Zaghoul uses to end the stanza, thus giving the word ‘īdī (my hand) emphasis and drawing attention to the power of his own hands. This helps to solidify his argument that Mousa’s claim to victory in their last encounter is unfounded and if he won anything it was only because Zaghoul let him “by his own hand” and that instead Mousa will now be forced to “kiss his hand.”

<sup>145</sup> When a poet raises and shakes or taps the tambourine, he indicates he is ready to take a turn. He may also tap the tambourine while singing or when closing a stanza or a turn. The tapping of the tambourine is part and parcel of the act of singing *zajal*. The mere carrying of the tambourine defines one as a poet of *zajal*.

## Sixth Stanza [18:40-21:07]

	وبنا لك بيت عالاربع زوايا	١/ يا موسى الحظ قدملك هدايا
18:40	1a) [iW] yā Mūsa-l-ḥazz ‘addamlak hadāyā	[iW] banālak bayt °a-l-‘arba° zawāyā
	1b) O Mousa, luck has presented you with gifts	And built for you a house with four corners
	1c) <i>Luck has given you many gifts, Mousa</i>	<i>And even built you a house with four solid walls</i>
	الكساكن عندما كنتوا عرايا	٢/ نصيبك مات نسر الاولاني
18:49	2a) Naṣībak māt nisir-il-‘awwalānī	L-kasākun °inidmā kintū °arāyā (#)
	2b) [It was] Your luck the eagle of primary importance <sup>146</sup> died,	Who clothed you (plural) when you were naked
	2c) <i>It was bad luck for you when that eagle and frontrunner died</i>	<i>Who clothed you and your ilk when you were naked</i>
	تا تحتك الشطايا بالشطايا	٣/ ونصيبك ما التقينا بجو تاني
19:00	3a) [iW] Naṣībak ma-l-ta’aynā b-jaww tānī	Ta tiḥtakk-ish-shazāyā b-ish-shazāyā <sup>147</sup>
	3b) And your luck/fate, we did not meet in other circumstances	The shrapnel would scrape against the shrapnel
	3c) <i>And it’s lucky for you we didn’t meet in another venue</i>	<i>Where shrapnel would clank with shrapnel</i>

<sup>146</sup> The reference is to Rukuz.

<sup>147</sup> Here is yet another example of Zaghoul’s use of word repetition for added emphasis and musicality.

19:07 4a) [W] Naṣībak baʿidmā fiḍyū-l-ʿanānī

L'aytak min ba'āyāhun ba'āyā<sup>148</sup> (#)

4b) And your luck/fate<sup>149</sup> after the bottles were emptied

I found you – a dreg among their dregs

4c) *It was your luck that when all the bottles were emptied*

*I found you at the bottom, a dreg among the dregs*

19:18 5a) ʿAnā lammā-l-waṭan killū daʿānī

Ta ghannī b-il-madāyin w-il-ʿarāyā

5b) I, when the whole country invited me

To sing in the cities and the villages<sup>150</sup>

5c) *As for me, when the whole country called on me*

*To sing in the cities and the villages*

<sup>148</sup> Zaghoul again uses immediate repetition, emphasizing the word's meaning (*ba'āyā* = dregs) and adding to the musicality of the line which he also extends with a long and beautiful melisma. He receives a loud applause for launching such an effective insult.

<sup>149</sup> This is the third instance of the word *Naṣībak* (your luck/bad fortune/fate) at the start of a line. This is similar to the use of *Ḍarūrī* (it is necessary that) in Zaghoul's Third Stanza. This "listing" strategy helps the poet compose numerous lines quickly and also has the rhetorical effect of emphasizing the particular word that starts the list. In the case of repeating *Naṣībak* (your luck/bad fortune/fate), Zaghoul emphasizes the notion that Mousa has only reached where he is by luck and now his luck has run out.

<sup>150</sup> This is another example of a pairing of opposites (*il-madāyin w-il-ʿarāyā* = cities and villages) which the audience can easily predict, especially because it includes an end rhyme, and thus sing along with Zaghoul.

لا سفهت الشباب ولا الصبايا

٦/ كرامة عين ولفي الاشقر اني

19:26 6a) Karāmit °ayn wi-lfiy-l-‘ash’arānī

La saffaht-ish-shabāb iw lā-ṣ-ṣabāyā (#)

6b) To honor of the eye<sup>151</sup> of my blonde companion

I didn’t make fools of the young men nor the young women<sup>152</sup>

6c) *To honor the request of my blonde companion*

*I did not disappoint the young men and women*

لبست بدلة زغاليل الطرايا

٧/ وقبل ما الدر يخلق عن لساني

19:35 7a) [iW] ‘abil ma-d-durr yikhla’ °an [i]lsānī

[i]Lbisit badlit zaghālīl-iṭ-ṭarāyā

7b) And before jewels were born on my tongue

I put on the mantel of the tender *zaghoul*s (baby doves)<sup>153</sup>

7c) *And before jewels were born on my tongue*

*I put on the mantel of the tender zaghoul*s

<sup>151</sup> i.e. to honor someone’s wishes, to be gracious

<sup>152</sup> Another example of pairing of opposites (*ish-shabāb iw lā-ṣ-ṣabāyā* = the young men nor the young women).

<sup>153</sup> An obvious reference to Zaghoul’s penname.

19:43 8a) [iW] riyāshī bayn ‘arzī w-sinidyānī

‘Izā byitnaffaḍū byibnū sarāyā (#)

8b) And my feathers between a cedar and an oak tree<sup>154</sup>

If they are shaken off they would build a palace

8c) *And if I flutter my feathers between the cedars and the oaks Their dust will be enough to build a palace*

19:54 9a) ‘Aṭayt-ish-sh‘ir min rūḥī ma‘ānī (#)

Şarakh Libnān yā n‘im-il-‘aṭāyā (#)

9b) I gave poetry from my soul meanings

Lebanon cried out, how wonderful are these gifts<sup>155</sup>

9c) *I gave to poetry deep meanings from my own soul*

*In gratitude Lebanon cried out “How wonderful are these gifts!”*

<sup>154</sup> The Lebanese cedar tree (cedrus libani), which appears on the Lebanese flag, is the quintessential symbol of Lebanon. Lebanese forests are primarily populated by Lebanese cedars and Quercus libani, the Lebanon oak (*sindyān*), the two most familiar trees for the audience. Zaghoul is clearly identifying himself as Lebanese to the core.

<sup>155</sup> The verb ‘aṭayt (I gave) that begins the first hemistich is echoed in the cognate noun ‘aṭāyā (gifts) that ends the second hemistich.

- 20:02 10a) [iW] ‘izā sijjalt hawnī<sup>156</sup> isiṭwānī  
 10b) And if<sup>157</sup> I recorded here a record album  
 10c) *And if I were to record a record album*

- Ca ṣakhr-iṣ-ṣamm biṣaffī marāyā  
 On the rock of deafness it would come out like mirrors  
*It will turn deaf stone into a thousand mirrors*

- 20:11 11a) ‘Anā Yūsif ‘anā ‘Allāh-ṣṭafānī  
 11b) I am Joseph<sup>158</sup> I am, God chose me  
 11c) *I am Joseph, I am the one God chose*

- ‘Anā mrabbī-l-maḥā b-dammū [i]l-khaṭāyā  
 I am the one who reared who wiped away with his blood the sins  
*To raise Him who washed away sin with His blood*

<sup>156</sup> In Ziadeh’s transcript, سجّلت هوني *sajjalt hawnī* (I recorded here) is given as بسجّل بصوتي *bsajjil b-ṣawtī* (I record in my voice).

<sup>157</sup> Beginning lines with the formulaic [iW] ‘izā (And if) provides another useful listing strategy. The conditional style is conducive to *zajal* poetics because once the conditional clause (hypothesis) is mentioned in the first hemistich; it anticipates the conclusion clause that will likely come in the second hemistich.

<sup>158</sup> Zaghoul’s real name is Joseph al-Hashem. The biblical Joseph (Yusif in Arabic) he is referring to here is Joseph the husband of Mary, mother of Jesus.

20:19 12a) [iW] ‘izā Mūsā smiyyak ʿā zamānī

Byijī, ta shalhū lawḥ-il-waṣāyā (#)

12b) And if Mousa your namesake to my time/lifetime<sup>159</sup>

Comes, then I’ll swipe from him the tablet of commandments

12c) *And if Moses your namesake stepped into the present*

*I’d swipe that tablet of commandments right out of his hands*

20:29 13a) [iW] yā Zayn [i]Shʿayb, yā rikn-il-mabānī

[W] yā bin Ḥamdān yā ṣa’r-il-manāyā

13b) And O Zayn Shʿayb<sup>160</sup>, you cornerstone of buildings

And O son of Hamdan<sup>161</sup>, you hawk of fates of death

13c) *O Zayn Shʿayb, sturdy foundation and cornerstone*

*And you, son of Hamdan, hawk of death*

<sup>159</sup> Here Zaghoul reintroduces the connection he established earlier tying Mousa to Moses, taking the analogy a step further by identifying himself with Christ and Mousa again with the Jews.

<sup>160</sup> Beginning with the mention of Zayn Shʿayb in this hemistich, Zaghoul includes the names of each of the members of his *jawqa* in the succeeding lines. Just as Mousa ended his *Iftitāhiyyi* with an introduction by name of the members of his *jawqa*, Zaghoul now does the same, as is customary. As will become clear in the final clincher line, Zaghoul takes the opportunity to boast about his own team, threaten his opponents, and sound the alarm that the duel is about to begin.

<sup>161</sup> Reference is to Ṭalīʿ Ḥamdān, another member of Zaghoul’s *jawqa*.



	لا تهتموا بتحليل القضايا	١٤ / وانت يا حرب، يا خزنة ملاني
20:37	14a) [iW] init yā Ḥarb, yā khaznī malānī	Lā tihtammū bi-taḥlīl-il-‘aḏāyā
	14b) And you, Harb <sup>162</sup> , you full storehouse/treasure house/safe	Don’t bother with analyzing matters
	14c) <i>And you, Harb, storehouse of treasures</i>	<i>Don’t bother yourselves analyzing things</i>
	بسر جو بكتف الاربع مطايا	١٥ / انا وحدي اذا بسر ج حصاني
20:44	15a) ‘Anā waḥdī ‘izā bisruj ḥiṣānī	Bi-sarjū b-kattif-il-‘arba <sup>c</sup> maṭāyā (#)
	15b) I by myself if I saddle my horse	With his saddle I will tie up all four mounts <sup>163</sup>
	15c) <i>I alone, if I were to saddle my horse</i>	<i>I would tie up all four of their mounts</i>
	عشية شرفو اربع فوارس	١٦ / وعناصر جوق موسى الكسرواني
20:52	16a) [iW] ‘anāṣir jaw’ Mūsā-l-Kisirwānī	<sup>c</sup> Ashiyyī sharrafū ‘arba <sup>c</sup> fawāris
	16b) And the members of the <i>jawqa</i> of Mousa the Keserwani <sup>164</sup>	In the evening they arrived [as] four knights
	16c) <i>And the members of the jawqa of Mousa the Keserwani</i>	<i>Arrived in the evening as four shining knights</i>

<sup>162</sup> Reference is to Edward Harb, the fourth member of Zaghoul’s *jawqa*.

<sup>163</sup> The reference is to Mousa and the three members of his *jawqa*.

<sup>164</sup> Zaghoul uses this place name tag meaning “the one from Keserwan (district in Mount Lebanon region Mousa hales from)”. It serves to contrast this Mousa with the Mousa (Moses) of biblical times that Zaghoul was likening him to previously. It has a belittling effect.

١٧/ وعاء بکرا بیرجعوا اربع ضحایا

17a) [W] ʿa bukrā byirjaʿū ‘arbaʿ ḡaḥāyā (#)

17b) And in the morning they’ll go back [as] four victims/slaughtered animals/blood sacrifices

17c) *But will return in the morning as four slaughtered victims*

### 3.1.7. *Iftitāḥiyyi* of Zaghoul al-Damour: Summary and Analysis

Zaghoul's *Iftitāḥiyyi* consists of six *qaṣīd* stanzas composed of 5, 7, 7, 7, 9, and 17 lines respectively, for a total of 52 lines. His *Iftitāḥiyyi* lasts approximately eight minutes and 19 seconds. While Zaghoul's *Iftitāḥiyyi* consists of fewer stanzas, fewer total lines, and does not last as long as Mousa's *Iftitāḥiyyi*, each of Zaghoul's lines lasts an average of roughly 9.5 seconds, which is slightly longer than Mousa's average. The extra time per line in Zaghoul's *Iftitāḥiyyi* is likely due to his tendency to add vocal ornamentation at every long vowel and with emphasis at the beginnings or ends of lines and hemistichs. Perhaps Zaghoul's greatest asset as a *zajal* poet is his beautiful singing voice which he never misses an opportunity to put on display and use to his advantage. He is famous for his voice and holds the record for the longest melisma. Poets use their voices and other non-verbal strategies for more than just buying time. The main objective, after all, is to gain favor with the audience. In addition to making sure the arguments are solid and interesting and whenever possible, witty, poets use their voices, faces, hands, and bodies to make themselves appealing to the audience. In an interview in *al-Mustaqbal* newspaper in 2003, Zaghoul states that a *zajal* poet's success is "Forty percent poetry and sixty percent voice." Poets take every opportunity possible to show off their voices with long and fancy *owfs*, long melismas, and other ornamentations. They are performers, after all, expressing every idea with talking hands and dancing eyebrows. They puff up their chests and dance in their seats as they sing. They smile and laugh and make eye contact with each other and with the audience and they comment on each other's lines with exclamations like "*Ya salaam*," "*Ya ʿayn*," and "*Tayyib*," all of which translate to something like, "Oh wow!" or "Good one!"

In his *Iftitāḥiyyi* segment, Zaghloul employed the following rhymes:

Stanza 1: Rhyme a = -yyī	Rhyme b = -ādī	Clincher = <b>khayyī</b> (my brother)
Stanza 2: Rhyme a = -īnī	Rhyme b = -l <sup>c</sup> a	Clincher = <b>ḥazīnī</b> (sad)
Stanza 3: Rhyme a = -ūnī	Rhyme b = - <sup>c</sup> nā	Clincher = <b>b-tinikrūnī</b> (you deny me)
Stanza 4: Rhyme a = -yyī	Rhyme b = -ṭla <sup>c</sup>	Clincher = <b>l-‘aḍiyyī</b> (the matter)
Stanza 5: Rhyme a = -īdī	Rhyme b = -aytū	Clincher = <b>‘īdī</b> (my hand)
Stanza 6: Rhyme a = -āyā	Rhyme b = -ānī	Clincher = <b>ḍaḥāyā</b> (victims)

Again we see the presence of long vowel endings in all of the “a rhymes.” Moreover, in the first five of his six stanzas Zaghloul used a final long ī vowel for “rhyme a” and in both Stanzas 1 and 6 he used it for “rhyme b.” As mentioned earlier, the long ī is the first-person pronoun suffix meaning “my” or “me.” This ending is for *nisba* adjectives as well and will crop up again when the *tā marbūṭa* is pronounced with *kasra* and is extended to long ī due to its position at the end of a line. A quick look at the actual rhyme words reveals the following count:

long ī as first-person pronoun suffix: 19 times

long ī as *nisba* adjective suffix: 3 times

long ī as feminine *tā marbūṭa* suffix: 25 times

other: 4 times

It is remarkable that of the 51 rhyme words ending in ī, only four are not achieved by means of a suffix: ثانِي tātī (second), قناني ‘anānī (bottles), معاني m<sup>c</sup>ānī (meanings), and مباني mabānī (buildings). It is also remarkable that over the span of approximately eight minutes, Zaghloul uses the first-person suffix nineteen times. This means he draws attention to himself with the

pronoun “my” or “me” at an average rate of a little more than twice a minute. Certainly this particular rhyme scheme loaded with first-person suffixes helps Zaghoul put himself in the limelight and convey to the audience his great importance and prominence as an individual. This is an idea which is initiated with his opening 12-second “Owf,” is developed in every stanza as he metaphorically equates himself to a variety of images (a poet-shepherd surrounded by herds of poet-sheep, a voice more explosive than the bomb dropped on sad Hiroshima, an affectionate mother caring for her infant through all hours of the night, a caretaker of orphans, an icon, a source of poetic provisions, a Christ-like figure whose dearest disciple denies him at dawn, a warrior capable of bringing down a mountain, a quintessential representative of Lebanon, a song bird, a namesake of Joseph who was chosen by God to raise Jesus), and is culminated in the final stanza when Zaghoul asserts that he alone could take on all four of his opponents and send them home as victims of his slaughter.

Over the course of his *Ifitāḥiyyi*, Zaghoul also contrasts himself with Mousa by ascribing to his opponent a series of negative images. In particular, he implies Mousa is one of those herds of poets who passed like sheep to his left and to his right, accuses him of turning his back on him like Peter when he denied Christ, belittles him as needing all the support he can get just to begin to battle with Zaghoul, accuses him of being misguided and of having made false claims of victory at their last encounter, equates him with Moses and associates him with the Jews as destroyers of Christ, calls him a lost and lonely baby girl, claims he is less valuable than the bullet he would use to kill him, and as a vain fool whose luck has run out. In several instances, Zaghoul turns Mousa’s words and images against him, firing back with powerful insults. Clearly, now that Zaghoul’s *Ifitāḥiyyi* has come to an end, the stage is set for the real duel to begin.

### 3.2. *Taḥaddīr*: Verbal Duel Segment

At the Beit Mery contest, the *Ifītāḥiyyi qaṣīds* delivered by *jawqa* lead poets Mousa Zoghayb and Zaghloul al-Damour were immediately followed by rounds of one-on-one duels between opposing members of each *jawqa*, conducted along the traditional ordering of turns based on seniority from least (rank four) to most experience (rank one)<sup>165</sup>. That is to say, following the *Ifītāḥiyyi* segment, it is customary for the “fours” from each *jawqa* to duel each other, followed by the “threes,” and then the “twos,” before the “ones,” or *jawqa* leaders, take over once again for the duel finale and final closing *qaṣīds*. In the case of the Battle of Beit Mery, the first two poets to engage in a duel were Edouard Harb (Zaghloul’s *jawqa*) and Butrus Deeb (Mousa’s *jawqa*). These were followed by Jiryis al-Bustani (Mousa’s *jawqa*) and Tali<sup>c</sup> Hamdan (Zaghloul’s *jawqa*), who were followed by Zayn Sh<sup>c</sup>ayb (Zaghloul’s *jawqa*) and Anis al-Faghali (Mousa’s *jawqa*). Finally, Zaghloul and Mousa returned to the spotlight to duel each other and deliver closing *qaṣīds*. This final duel, along with the lead poets’ closing *qaṣīds*, will be examined in detail in the next section of this study. But first some general remarks about the formal characteristics of the four duels and a quick summary of the preceding three duels are in order.

#### 3.2.1. Verbal Duel: Formal Features

At the Beit Mery event, each pair of opponents followed a similar sequence of turns. They dueled back and forth with eight to nine short stanzas of the traditional *ma<sup>c</sup>annā* genre (more about this below) and closed their duels with two turns each of closing *qaṣīds*. The

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<sup>165</sup> This ranking by seniority, which is certainly known well to the poets, is also clear to the audience as it is reflected in the order in which the names of the members of each *jawqa* are listed on flyers and posters advertising the *zajal* event.

closing *qaṣīds* were of the same form and rhyme scheme as the *Ifitāḥiyya qaṣīds* of Mousa and Zaghoul described in detail earlier, though not nearly as long. Closing *qaṣīds* ranged from sixteen lines (shortest of the closing *qaṣīds* by the “fours”) to thirty-one lines (longest of the closing *qaṣīds* by the “twos”) per stanza. The shorter *ma<sup>c</sup>annā* stanza turns, by which the duel proper is characterized, ranged from four lines to eleven lines in length, though most were between six and eight lines long. Like the *qaṣīd* form, each line of the *ma<sup>c</sup>annā* stanza is composed of two hemistichs, but unlike the *qaṣīd* form, in the *ma<sup>c</sup>annā* form both hemistichs end with the same end-rhyme (rhyme a) throughout the stanza, that is, the *ṣadr* and *ajz* rhymes are identical throughout. However, the final line of the *ma<sup>c</sup>annā* stanza is distinguished from all the others by the introduction of a non-rhyme (rhyme x) at the end of its first hemistich (*ṣadr*). The final hemistich ends with a return to the original end-rhyme. The rhyme scheme of the *ma<sup>c</sup>annā* genre can be summarized as follows:

-----a	-----a
-----a	-----a
-----a	-----a
	etc
-----x	-----a
Chorus :	-----a
	-----a

Throughout the verbal duel, the final hemistich of each poet’s turn is immediately picked up by the *riddādi* (repeaters/chorus) who sing it twice to the accompaniment of tambourines and hand-held drums according to a set musical tune and rhythm. Once a poet has completed a turn, the *riddādi* (chorus) repeat the last hemistich two times. When the hemistich is sung by the chorus it is fitted into the music in a manner that gives rise to the insertion of extra vowels and

consequently extra syllables, so that it fits the musical tune, rhythm, and meter. The singing by the chorus of the poet's last hemistich helps the poet, his opponent, and the audience. The poets are aided by hearing the musical tune sung and repeated, thus helping them to stay in tune, and also by having their clincher lines repeated and emphasized. The chorus leads the musical rendition for the audience to follow and sing along, allowing them to participate and enjoy the moment while the poet's opponent prepares to deliver a response.

It is worth noting that during the Beit Mery encounter, despite its lasting many, many hours and going well into the early morning, the poets did not employ many of the large variety of the *zajal* genres available to them. The reason for this resides in the heated nature of the battle. The two *jawqas* had dueled previously, in particular almost a year earlier at Al-Mishrif, a duel all of the poets alluded to in their *Ifitāhiyyi qasīds*. After the battle at Al-Mishrif, the poets and their supporters were very vocal in the media and in the community at large about who had won. Despite there not having been an official judging panel's declaration of the winners, both sides claimed victory. In preparation for the Beit Mery duel, a distinguished panel of judges was invited to attend the duel and declare an official winner. During the ten months leading up to it, *zajal* enthusiasts in Lebanon rallied behind their favorite *jawqa*, publicly declaring their affiliation and support more so than for political candidates running for public office. According to highly-acclaimed *zajal* poet Antoine Saadeh, with whom I have had many *zajal*-related conversations since meeting him in Lebanon in 2009, during the Beit Mery era, if a supporter of Mousa's *jawqa* happened to find himself in the company of a supporter of Zaghloul's *jawqa*, the two would certainly indulge in insults and mockery and "would not be caught dead" seated together. Thus, when the poets arrived at the Beit Mery contest on that hot July night back in 1971, it was after a long gestation period of stored up rivalry and anticipation. As Michel Ziadeh,



a main sponsor of the event and author of the book containing a transcript of the duel, described it as follows:

No sooner had the date of the contest at Beit Mery been announced for the evening of July 31, 1971, than people spilled forth like an ocean wave. Some were forced to abandon their cars and trek the remaining five kilometers to reach the Beit Mery Citadel by foot. The audience was in record attendance, estimated at thirty thousand spectators. The contest ended at five o'clock the next morning (Ziadeh 8).

Not only were the poets ready for battle and set on destroying each other on the stage, but their followers were equally enthusiastic to see their favorites' opponents slaughtered. Throughout the long night, both the poets and the audience were on the edge of their seats, hanging on every word, responding with delight when their poets were especially clever or sang with beautiful, emotion-charged voices, certainly, but also when the opponents met each challenge boldly and wittily. This was a thrilling and memorable event. It was not an occasion to which oral poets had been invited to provide entertainment, as is more often the case in today's *zajal* events taking place nowadays as the second decade of the third millennium unfolds. Today's *zajal* occasions are not usually as heated and intense as the Beit Mery contest, and poets like to incorporate a wide variety of genres that feature quick, upbeat tunes, verbal tricks, and other livening tactics that help to keep the audience engaged. At Beit Mery, on the other hand, throughout the course of the evening the poets were intent on accomplishing the very serious business of *ʿiṣābat al-maʿnā*, "striking the meaning," or "making a strong argument." There was a lot at stake at Beit Mery, and thousands were watching with high expectations to see their favorites prevail, providing the perfect atmosphere to push the *zajal* poets to perform their art at new heights.

### 3.2.2. Verbal Duel Summary: Edouard Harb versus Butrus Deeb

Edouard Harb initiated the duel and Butrus Deeb closed it. Each poet took eight turns of short stanzas and then took two turns each of long stanzas of *qaṣīd*. The majority of short stanzas consisted of six lines each, but ranged from five to eight lines over the course of the duel. The long *qaṣīd* stanzas ranged between sixteen and eighteen lines each. Their duel lasted approximately 34 minutes.

Early in the duel, the theme of imprisonment versus freedom develops. Edouard argues on the side of imprisonment, offering the images of silos, wine barrels, secrets, and good homes as examples of prisons that are positive because of what they hold within them (grain for nourishment, wine to quench lovers' lips, a promise kept for a friend, and well-mannered children). Butrus responds by arguing that the great people who come out of "good homes," like the President of the Republic and other national heroes, don't wander down the path to prison and if prison is to be the place for children (referring to Edouard's previous line) then we should lock all the school doors shut. Edouard retorts by naming several national heroes who became heroes because they were sent to prison and that prison is only for the strong, unlike the weakling Butrus who "nobody's ever heard of in school." Butrus responds by arguing that Edward is wrong; prison is not the place for heroes but for criminals. The number of great men who ended up in prison is very small, whereas the number of criminals there is like counting grains of sand. And those great men who won Lebanon's independence did so only after getting out of prison. The flag flaps for freedom, not imprisonment. Edouard offers new examples of positive forms of imprisonment, most notably the nine months of imprisonment in the mother's womb, to which Butrus responds with a list of items that must not be kept imprisoned: a flower's fragrance, truth lest it be lost, light lest we become unable to see, an infant's exit from his mother's womb

lest he be imprisoned too long and cause both his and his mother's death. Other images offered by Edouard on the side of imprisonment: love as a tortuous prison whose doors were slammed shut by a beautiful brunette, flowers imprisoned in a flower pot, the alphabet imprisoned in the page of a book, a youthful spirit imprisoning youthfulness in the body despite the passing of years, prison is like a school run by nuns for the holy purpose of teaching purity, like the cloistering of monks, to worship the heavens. Other images offered by Butrus on the side of freedom: a man will do anything to break out of prison or to break the bonds of slavery, St. Sharbel took on his hermitage to escape man's sinfulness and to seek his own eternal freedom, Gibran would not have written *The Prophet* had he not emigrated to America, the alphabet forged by Cadmus's hand traversed the shores and the big blue sea, and if we had not set our minds free we never would have sent a man to the moon. This last image is delved into further in the closing *qaṣīds*. Edouard argues man would never have reached the moon had he not been imprisoned in a rocket ship. Butros concludes his first *qaṣīd* with a clincher line saying that heaven is not a prison, hell is a prison, and Edouard ought to go count himself among those evil-doing blasphemers imprisoned there. Edouard ends his second *qaṣīd* saying he would never lock the doors of prison because it makes criminals like Butros pay for their crimes. Finally, Butros's last argument is to tell Edouard he's not leaving the duel until Edouard and his cronies are locked up in the prison of the Beit Mery fortress for breaking all the laws of *ma'anna* (*zajal* poetry).

### 3.2.3. Verbal Duel Summary: Jiryis al-Bustani versus Tali<sup>c</sup> Hamdan

Jiryis al-Bustani gave the opening stanza of the duel and Tali<sup>c</sup> Hamdan gave the closing stanza. Each poet took eight turns of short stanzas and then each took two turns of long stanzas of *qaṣīd*. Most of the short stanzas were seven or eight lines long, but ranged from six to as

many as eleven lines. Jiryis' *qaṣīd* stanzas were twenty-two lines each; Tali<sup>c</sup>'s were twenty-five and twenty-eight lines. Their duel lasted approximately 38 minutes.

The duel between Jiryis and Tali<sup>c</sup> serves as an excellent example of boasting. They begin their duel with swords brandished, so to speak, each offering images of the bloody battle he is about to win. On Jiryis's second turn he delivers some particularly clever and boastful lines in which he claims the sun will only rise if he commands it to and will fall to its knees before him if he so requests, he describes the rainbow as a mere ring around his pinky finger. The image of a piece of paper takes on particular significance over the course of the duel. Jiryis first introduces the image in his third turn when he calls Tali<sup>c</sup> "a piece of paper among neglected papers," to trivialize his importance as a poet. Tali<sup>c</sup> responds by running with the paper image and turning it to his own advantage. Over the course of his turn, the paper is described as Jiryis's death notice, a page from the Bible, and one of the famous hanging odes (*mu<sup>c</sup>allaqa*) that Tali<sup>c</sup> dares Jiryis to emulate or himself be hanged. From this point, the hanging image is tied to religious references and national heroes. The images of the cedar tree (quintessential symbol of Lebanon) and the father gain prominence for several stanzas before the image of a bride develops. This eventually leads to an exciting exchange near the end of the duel beginning with Tali<sup>c</sup> calling Jiryis "a girl," only to have Jiryis recite the long list of important achievements and characteristics of famous females from Arabic literature and history.

#### **3.2.4. Verbal Duel Summary: Zayn Sh<sup>c</sup>ayb versus Anis al-Faghali**

Zayn Sh<sup>c</sup>ayb started the duel with Anis al-Faghali and Anis ended it. Each poet took nine turns of short stanzas and then two turns each of long *qaṣīd* stanzas. Most of the short stanzas were seven or eight lines long, but ranged from as few as four in Zayn's opening turn to two ten-

line stanzas, one from each poet. Zayn's *qaṣīd* stanzas were sixteen and twenty-four lines long; Anis' were thirty-one and thirty lines each. Their duel lasted approximately 48 minutes.

Zayn has the reputation of being "*sayyid al-marājil*," the master of bravado, the macho-man of daring. In this duel he begins by proclaiming that the fun and games are over, the "tweety birds" have sung their songs, those who have taken their turns managed to escape unharmed, but now the "eagle" who has been patiently waiting in the wings, the "*'aṣṣāfil-<sup>c</sup>mār*" (destroyer of lives; the executioner) has arrived. Whoever feels like being destroyed, let him come forth to battle me! Anis responds to this by saying he's accustomed to Zayn and his empty dares and tells Zayn he should keep his distance, this battle's snow is fiery flames, its kindling is devils, kings, slaves, mountains of flint and quarries of iron. He says to Zayn, "you call yourself an eagle? You're going to shorten my life? Even if you had a hand as long as a day of hunger and as violent as Nero's fist or as cruel as Abd al-Hamid (notorious Turkish Sultan), you'd be dead in your tracks before you could take one day from the life of the Sultan of *Ma<sup>c</sup>anna*!" Zayn turns the image of Anis as a self-proclaimed "sultan" into "Sultan Ibrahim," the Lebanese name for a popular, small and tasty kind of fish (named after the Ottoman sultan said to have liked it and eaten it in excess). He ends his turn saying he's here to purify *ma<sup>c</sup>anna* from the "sultans of lying and swindling." This type of name-calling continues, each poet bewailing his having to duel with such a lesser opponent and proclaiming the many ways each one will destroy the other. Eventually the insults become very personal. They sling accusations along religious and political lines, each one claiming to be the protector of both Christianity and Islam (regardless of his affiliation) and the most nationalistic of men while simultaneously accusing the other of blasphemy and of being in cahoots with national enemies. At one point, Zayn calls Anis a "westerner" who is diametrically opposed to himself, an "easterner" and an "Arab," one of

those greats who in Jerusalem “built the Church upon the shrine and the Aqsa mosque with the blood of the wounded,” and who “built the house of Jesus and Muhammad,” unlike “you, Anis, and your ilk” who destroyed both those houses. To this Anis responds with the argument that the west has its good qualities and there are things to be learned from there and if we do not reconcile with them, all our houses will be lost to our children and generations to come. Zayn retorts by calling Anis a collaborator with “our enemies to the south,” and asks him why when the houses in the south were destroyed he didn’t open up his own home to the women and children. At this point it becomes very personal when Anis brings up the fact of Zayn’s many wives and children. Zayn responds by boasting about his having “planted the lands” for the aggrandizement of Lebanon, to build a “Grand Lebanon,” as he puts it. Anis answers this with the argument that it is the quality and not the quantity of children that builds a nation. He calls each of Zayn’s children examples of what comes of “dough balls with no yeast.” They turned out to be “bodyguards for tough guys, criminals, outlaws, and thieves.” None of them has ever even heard of Shakespeare or the highly regarded pre-Islamic poet Imru’ al-Qays or Jarir, the famous Umayyad poet, Anis says, and states that these are not the types of children we need to build up our country. We need educated, open-minded men, and if all we get instead are the progeny of Abu Ali (Zayn’s nickname) then Lebanon is in deep trouble! In the closing *qaṣīds*, they continue to argue this point. Zayn delivers a long list of great deeds by great “Eastern” and Arab historical figures, leading to his reiteration that he and his children are all descendents of that greatness. Furthermore, he is the “father” who adopted all the “eagles of poetry” under his wing on the stage of *zajal*. His children were reared on the art of Muslims and Christians, and there is not a single poet who raised his head with pride whom I did not teach to sing and provide a model for. At this point, Anis belittles Zayn’s claim to poetry and crowns himself as the King

of *zajal* and *ma'anna*. The duel ends along the themes of child-rearing, reaping what you sow, and with both poets continuing to boast about themselves while simultaneously slinging bigger and bigger insults at the other.

### 3.3. Verbal Duel between Zaghoul al-Damour and Mousa Zoghayb: Transcript, Transliteration, Trot, and Translation

#### 3.3.1. First Exchange

##### 3.3.1.1. Zaghoul

هَلَّقَ رَحْ نَرْجَعْ لَعَيْنِيهَا الْبَهَا

١/ نَعَسَتْ نَجُومُ اللَّيْلِ مَدْرِي شَوْ بَهَا

21:12 1a) Ni<sup>c</sup>siṭ [i]njūm il-layl midrī shū bihā

Halla' raḥ [i]nrajjī<sup>c</sup> li-<sup>c</sup>aynayhā-l-bahā

1b) The night's stars are sleepy I don't know what's wrong with them

Now we will bring back to their eyes brilliance

1c) *The stars look sleepy, I wonder what's wrong*

*Let me put the brilliance back into their eyes*

وَكُلُّ صَدْرٍ مَنَا قَدْ صَدَرَ الْمُنْتَهَى

٢/ يَا دِيرُ قَوْلَ لَقْلَعَتِكَ نَحْنَا لَهَا

21:23 2a) Yā dayr 'ūl [i]l-'ali<sup>c</sup>tak niḥnā lihā

[W] kill ṣadr minnā 'add ṣadr-il-muntahā

2b) O monastery, tell your fortress/citadel we are for it

And every breast is the size of infinity's breast<sup>166</sup>

2c) *O monastery, tell your fortress we are on its side*

*And each chest of ours is as vast as the horizon*

<sup>166</sup>It is to be noted that the repeated word *ṣadr*, meaning “breast” is also the term used for the first hemistich of a line of poetry. So when Zaghoul states “each *ṣadr* from us” it not only means each of the poets in his *jawqa*, but also each line of verse. In the second instance, *ṣadr-il-muntahā*, literally “the *ṣadr* of infinity,” the word is being used figuratively as something vast and huge.



وشفت عيون السبع عا عيون المهى

٣/ بحفلة "المشرف" بالدلع موسى التهى

21:34 3a) [B]ḥaflit il-mishrif bi-d-dala<sup>c</sup> Mūsā –l-tahā

[W]shif<sup>it</sup> [i]<sup>c</sup>yūn is-sab<sup>c</sup> a<sup>c</sup> yūn il-mahā

3b) At “Mishrif” with pampering Mousa entertained himself

And the lion’s eyes took pity on the doe’s eyes<sup>167</sup>

3c) *At Mishrif Mousa got carried away doting on himself*

*And the lion’s eyes took pity on the doe*

بدك تلاقي بعكس ما القلب اشتهى

٤/ واليوم يا موسى اذا الداهي دها

21:44 4a) [W]il-yawm yā Mūsā iza-d-dāhī dahā<sup>168</sup>

Baddak [i]tlā<sup>i</sup> [b]<sup>c</sup>akis ma-l-‘alb-ishtahā

4b) And today, Mousa, if catastrophe falls

You want/need to find the opposite of the heart’s desire

4c) *But today, Mousa, if calamity runs its course*

*You’ll find the opposite of your heart’s desire*

تا شوف روحك فاصلي وكل شي انتهى

٥/ مش رح منتهي معركتنا الفاصلي

21:53 5a) Mish raḥ [i]mninhī ma<sup>c</sup>rakitnā-l-fāṣlī

Ta shūf rūḥak fāṣlī<sup>169</sup> [w]kill shī ntahā

5b) We will not end our decisive battle

Until I see your soul separated and everything finished

5c) *Our decisive battle will not end*

*Until I see your soul torn apart and everything come to an end*

<sup>167</sup> Zaghoul is associating himself with the lion and Mousa with the doe.

<sup>168</sup> Zaghoul once again uses cognates: *dāhī* (catastrophe) *dahā* (attacks; falls).

<sup>169</sup> Zaghoul incorporates a pun by using the word *fāṣlī* to mean “decisive” in the first hemistich and “separated” in the second hemistich.

### Choral Refrain<sup>170</sup>:

22:02

تا شوف روحك فاصلي وكل شي انتهى (twice)

Ta shūf-[ī] rū ḥak [i] fā šī lī [w]kill[i] shī in tā hā (twice)

Until I see your soul separated and everything finished

*Until I see your soul torn apart and everything come to an end*

### 3.3.1.2. Mousa

رجعوا الليالي يتوجوا فيكي الملك

١ / اوخ...اعتزي يا قلعة بيت مري وضوي الحلك

22:22 1a) Ōkh...i<sup>c</sup>tazzī ya ‘al<sup>c</sup>it Bet Miri w ḍawwī-l-ḥalak

Rij<sup>c</sup>ū-l-layālī yta<sup>w</sup>wijū fiki-l-malak

1b) Owkh.Be proud Beit Mery citadel and ignite the pitch dark

The nights have returned to crowning in you the king

1c) Owkh..Be proud, Beit Mery castle, and light up the darkness

*The nights are back to crown the king within your walls*

<sup>170</sup> Throughout the verbal duel, once a poet has completed a turn, the *riddādi* (chorus) repeats the last hemistich two times. When the hemistich is sung by the chorus it is fitted into the musical rhythm in a manner that gives rise to the insertion of extra vowels and consequently extra syllables, so that it fits the musical meter. In this first example, Zaghloul's hemistich with its ten syllables is expanded to fifteen when sung by the chorus. The singing by the chorus of the poet's last hemistich helps the poet, his opponent, and the audience. The poets are aided by hearing the musical tune sung and repeated, thus helping them to stay in tune, and also by having their clincher lines repeated and emphasized. The chorus leads the musical rendition for the audience to follow and sing along, allowing them to participate and enjoy the moment while the poet's opponent prepares to deliver a response.

	هالفاصلة سيف الفصل عامفصاك	٢/ ز غلول شطب عا فجر مستقبلك
22:38	2a) Zaghlūl shaṭṭib ʿā fajir mustaʿbalak	Ha-l-fāṣli sayf-il-faṣil ʿā maṣṣalak <sup>171</sup>
	2b) Zaghloul, scratch out on the dawn of your future	That separation the sword of separating on your joint[s]
	2c) <i>Zaghloul, on the dawn of your future scratch out</i>	<i>That separation, that sword severing your limbs</i>
	ما استدرجك عالدير حتى يدلك	٣/ البكاك بالمشراف عا عتبة منزللك
22:49	3a) [i]L-bakkāk bi-l-Mishrif ʿā ʿatbit manzalak	Ma-stadrajak ʿa-d-dayr ḥatta ydallilak
	3b) He who made you weep at Mishrif at the doorstep of your home	Did not allure you to the monastery to pamper you
	3c) <i>He who made you cry on your own doorstep at Mishrif</i>	<i>Didn't draw you to the monastery to pamper you</i>
	صرنا قلاع تتين نتحدى الفلك	٤/ داعيك قلعة ودررب هالقلعة سلك
23:00	4a) Dāʿik ʿalʿa [i]w darib ha-l-ʿalʿa salak	Ṣirna ʿlāʿ [i]tnayn niṭhadda-l-falak
	4b) The one calling you is a fort and the road to this fort he trod	We have become two fortresses challenging the stars
	4c) <i>Yours truly is a fortress and trod the path to this fortress</i>	<i>Now we are two fortresses challenging the stars</i>

<sup>171</sup> Mousa uses the word *fāṣli* (introduced by Zaghloul in line 5 of his preceding turn) and adds two cognates: *faṣil* (separating) and *maṣṣal* (joint). This is an example of how, during the verbal duel, poets take particular words and images and swat them back and forth at each other in a type of volley. The audience responds with gleeful applause at such moments, delighted by the word play and verbal attack.

وتدق راسك مطرح الالهون الك

٥/ وما ضل غير تختار قلعة من التنتين

23:09 5a) W ma ḍall ghar tikhtār ‘al°a mnit-tnayn

W tdi’’ rāsak maṭraḥ-i-l-‘ahwan ilak

5b) And nothing remains but for your to choose a fortress from the two

And bang your head wherever is easiest for you

5c) *All you have to do is choose one of the two fortresses*

*And bang your head on whichever one is easier*

**Choral Refrain:**

وتدق راسك مطرح الالهون الك (twice)

23:17

W tdi’ ’[i] rā sak [i] maṭ raḥ- i-l- ‘ah[i] wan i lak (twice)

And bang your head wherever is easiest for you

*And bang your head on whichever one is easier*

### 3.3.1.3. Verbal Duel Summary and Explication: First Exchange [21:12 – 23:32]

Zaghloul opens the duel with a five-line stanza of *ma<sup>c</sup>annā*. His rhyme, which in the *ma<sup>c</sup>annā* form is maintained at the end of every hemistich of the stanza except for the penultimate one, is *-hā*. This particular rhyme is conducive to oral composition since it is the feminine singular suffix pronoun meaning “her,” “it,” “its,” and when referring to non-human plurals, “them,” or “their.” However, of the nine instances of the end-rhyme *-hā* in Zaghloul’s five lines, only two feature *hā* as a pronoun suffix: line 1 first hemistich: *shū bihā* (what’s wrong with **them**); and line 2 first hemistich: *niḥnā lihā* (we are for **it**). All the others are nouns or verbs that happen to end with this sound: *l-bahā* (brilliance); *il-muntahā* (infinity); *l-tahā* (entertained himself); *il-mahā* (the doe); *dahā* (fell); *ishtahā* (desired); *ntahā* (ended).

Zaghloul’s *maṭla<sup>c</sup>*, or opening line, which he delivers with characteristic vocal virtuosity, offers beautiful poetic imagery as well. It has been two hours or so since he and Mousa sang their opening *qaṣīds*. He and his *jawqa* and the audience have been engaged in the intense duels between the other three pairs of poets and fatigue has undoubtedly begun to set in. When Zaghloul describes the stars as looking sleepy, he makes a subtle metaphoric equation between the stars in the night sky and the eyes of the audience members on the ground. In effect, he comes back to the stage with fresh energy to awaken the listeners and heal them of their ailments with his poetry. In the remaining lines of his opening stanza, Zaghloul wastes no time turning his attention to Mousa and launching an attack. He begins by allying himself and his companions with Beit Mery, and describes his companions as having chests “as vast as the horizon.” He contrasts himself as “a lion” with Mousa as “a doe,” and reuses the eye image from the opening line to do so (the lion’s *eyes* took pity on the doe’s *eyes*). He brings up the previous battle at Mishrif again, casting himself as having allowed Mousa to gain some points on him out

of pity and hospitality. This time, however, there will be no sympathy, because Zaghoul has come to tear Mousa to pieces.

Zaghoul's imagery is violent from the start in this opening stanza, and he adds force to the imagery with effective word play. In line 4, when he mentions the calamity about to befall Mousa, he uses cognates (*dāhī* and *dahā*) and in the two hemistichs of line 5 he incorporates a pun on the repeated word *fāṣlī* (decisive/separated). In addition to the imagery and wordplay, Zaghoul's voice is a constant weapon he brandishes at every line and never wastes an opportunity to show off.

Mousa replies with a matching five-line stanza of *ma<sup>c</sup>annā*. His rhyme is *-lak*, the last part of which is also a pronoun suffix, *ak*, meaning "you" or "your". Of his nine *-lak* rhymes, five of them are of this type, including the end rhyme of the final clincher hemistich that is sung twice by the chorus between turns. These are found in line 2, first hemistich, *musta'balak* (your future); line 2, second hemistich, *maḥṣalak* (your joints); line 3, first hemistich, *manzalak* (your home); line 3, second hemistich, *ydallilak* (pamper you), and line 5, second hemistich, *ilak* (for you). The remaining rhymes are nouns and verbs: *ḥalak* (pitch darkness), *malak* (king), *salak* (he trod), and *falak* (the stars).

Like Zaghoul, Mousa delivers a beautifully poetic *maṭla<sup>c</sup>* filled with imagery about the darkness of the night. He addresses Beit Mery castle with pride and respect and metaphorically equates himself with the "king being crowned within its walls," as in days of old. Mousa then immediately turns his attention to striking back at Zaghoul and does so with some violent imagery of his own. In line 2 he threatens Zaghoul with a "decisive sword" that will "sever his limbs," and at the end of the stanza gives Zaghoul a choice of hard places on which to "bash his

head.” Mousa responds to Zaghoul’s mention of the previous battle at Mishrif by insistently claiming victory there and emphasizing the location as having been on Zaghoul’s “own doorstep.”

Mousa’s word choices and word play are also very effective. In the second hemistich of line 2, Mousa repeats Zaghoul’s word *fāṣlī* (from Zaghoul’s line 5). Mousa uses the word as a noun meaning “separation,” or “comma,” which differs from Zaghoul’s usage as the adjective “decisive.” Though spelled differently (the noun with feminine ending, the adjective with nisba ending) they are pronounced the same way in Lebanese dialect. Mousa then adds two cognates to the word game: *fāṣil* (separation, in the phrase *sayf-il- fāṣil*, the sword of separation, which incidentally offers an additional layer of visual imagery since a sword might also be seen to resemble a comma, another meaning of *fāṣili*); and *maṣṣal* (joint, in the phrase about separating Zaghoul’s joints/limbs). This is a good example of how particular words and images that are introduced by one poet are often repeated and extended by the other poet as a way of retorting or negating or twisting his opponent’s words against him. Or, the poet will expand on a word or image as a way of showing off his own verbal skills and gaining points with the judges and the crowd, as this kind of word play always draws applause and excitement from the audience. Sometimes these repeated words and images develop into major themes that are carried for several stanzas. In this first exchange, we see that the word *fāṣlī* was introduced by Zaghoul in his clincher hemistich and that this same word was picked up, repeated and extended by Mousa in his second line. Other repeated words and images include the town names Beit Mery and Mishrif, the words for monastery and fortress/citadel, and the images of stars and the night sky.

### 3.3.2. Second Exchange

#### 3.3.2.1. Zaghoul

وضيفي انت كنت وانا لضيفي فدا

١/ المشرف يا موسى كان الي فيها صدی

23:33 1a) Il-Mishrif yā Mūsā kan ilī fihā ṣadā

W ḍayfī init kint w anā l-ḍayfī fidā

1b) [At] Mishrif, Mousa, I had there a resounding echo

And my guest you were and I for my guest am a sacrifice

1c) *I made a resounding echo at Mishrif, Mousa*

*You were my guest there and for a guest I will sacrifice all*

بعملك من القلب ترويقة و غدا

٢/ بتقدر عا بيتي تزورني اليوم و غدا

23:46 2a) [i]Bti'dir °a baytī tzūrnī-l-yawm w ghadā

Bi°millak [i]mnīl-°alb tirwī'a w ghadā<sup>172</sup>

2b) You can to my home visit today and tomorrow

I will make you from the heart<sup>173</sup> breakfast and lunch

2c) *You can visit me at my home today and any day*

*I'll make you breakfast and dinner from the heart*

<sup>172</sup> Zaghoul uses the same word, *ghadā*, at the end of both hemistichs of this line, the first time using the meaning “tomorrow” and the second time using the meaning “lunch”.

<sup>173</sup> When Zaghoul says “from my heart” he means it figuratively, as in “from the bottom of my heart” or “wholeheartedly.” It could also be meant literally, as if he is offering his own heart as breakfast and lunch.



	بدها تصيبك قد ما يطول المدى	٣/ لكن بقلعة بيت مري سهام الردى
23:57	3a) Lākin bi-‘al <sup>c</sup> it <sup>174</sup> Bet Mirī s-hām-ir-radā	Bad-hā tṣībak ‘add ma yṭūl-il-madā
	3b) But at the fortress of Beit Mery the arrows of ruin	Will strike you as much as the expanse is long
	3c) <i>But here in Beit Mery the arrows of ruin</i>	<i>Will strike you as deeply as the expanse is wide</i>
	سكتت ووقفت من فزعها عا حده	٤/ دقيت عالقلعة وقلت وين العدى
24:07	4a) Di’’ayt <sup>175</sup> <sup>c</sup> a-l-‘al <sup>c</sup> a w ‘ilit wayn-il- <sup>c</sup> idā	Saktit w wi’fit min faza <sup>c</sup> -hā <sup>c</sup> a ḥidā
	4b) I knocked on the fortress and I said where are the enemies	It was silent and stood from its fright aside
	4c) <i>I knocked on the fortress and said, “Bring on the enemies!”</i>	<i>It stood up in silent fright at finding itself all alone</i>

<sup>174</sup> In Ziadeh’s transcript, ‘al<sup>c</sup>it Bet Miri (fortress of Beit Mery) is given as *ḥaflit Bet Miri* (party/zajal party of Beit Mery).

<sup>175</sup> Zaghloul picks up the verb *Di’’ayt*, which here means “I knocked,” from Mousa’s final hemistich in his previous turn in which he told Zaghloul he should *tdi’’* (bang) his head on one the fortress of his choosing.

دَقَّيتْ فَيْكْ وَرَاحَتْ الدَّقَّةُ سَدَى

٥/ وَرَجَعْتَ لَمَّا الْخَوْفُ عَالِقُةٌ بِدَا

24:16 5a) W[i] rji<sup>c</sup>t lamma-l-khawf<sup>c</sup>a-l-‘al<sup>c</sup>a badā

Da’’ayt fīk w rāḥit-id-da’’a sidā<sup>176</sup>

5b) And I returned when fear on the fortress appeared

Knocked on you and the knock<sup>177</sup> went in vain

5c) *When that fear appeared on the fortress I went back*

*And knocked on you, but the knock had been in vain*

فَلَّوْا اللَّيْ كَانُوا هَوْنٌ مَشْ بَاقِي حَدَا

٦/ وَسَمِعْتُ مِنْ رَاسِكَ صَدَى جَاوِبٍ وَقَالَ

24:24 5a) W[i] smi<sup>c</sup>it min rāsak<sup>178</sup> ṣadā jāwab w ‘āl

Fallu-lli-kānū hawn mish bā’ī ḥadā

5b) And I heard from your head an echo answered and said

They who were here have gone no one is left

5c) *I heard an echo ring out from your head which said:*

*Everyone took off, not a single soul is left*

<sup>176</sup> Note that Zaghoul pronounces the word *sudā* as *sidā* to rhyme with the previous line ending in *ḥidā*. All the rhymes in this stanza end either with *idā* or *adā*, but not *udā*. Therefore, Zaghoul pronounced *sudā* as *sidā*. Perfect example of poetic license.

<sup>177</sup> Here Zaghoul again repeats the verb *Di’’ayt*, (I knocked) twice in this hemistich.

<sup>178</sup> The word *rāsak* (your head) is another word taken from Mousa’s previous turn and slung back at him. Remember that Mousa told Zaghoul to choose which fortress he preferred to bash his head against at the end of his last turn.

### Choral Refrain:

فلّوا اللي كانوا هون مش باقي حدا (twice)

24:33

Fal lu –lli- kā nū ha w[i] n[i] mish bā ’ī ḥa dā (twice)

They who were here have gone no one is left

*Everyone took off, not a single soul is left*

### 3.3.2.2. Mousa

كنت الاله لشعرك وكنت النبي

١ / آخ...يا مشرف الكنتي بشعري معجبي

24:51 1a) Ōkh..yā Mishrif-il-kintī bi-shi<sup>c</sup>rī<sup>179</sup> mu<sup>c</sup>jabī

Kint il-ilāh [i]l-shi<sup>c</sup>rik w kint-in-nabī

1b) Owkh..O Mishrif, you who were of my poetry enamored

I was the god of your poetry and I was the prophet

1c) Owkh...Mishrif, you who adored my poetry

*I was the god of your poetry and I was its prophet*

<sup>179</sup> Note the major discrepancy between Ziadeh’s transcript and the recorded poetry. In the transcript this line is given as: شعر الاله بارضك وشعر النبي *Shi<sup>c</sup>r il-ilāh bi-arḍik w shi<sup>c</sup>r-in-nabī* meaning “The poetry of God in your land and the poetry of the prophet.”

	ووعيت وحصدت النتيجة المرعي	٢/ دقيت راسك في دروع مكهربي
25:05	2a) Da''ayt rāsak fī drū <sup>c</sup> mkahrabī	W w <sup>c</sup> īt w ḥṣadt-in-natīji-l-mir <sup>c</sup> ibī
	2b) You [Zaghloul] banged your head <sup>180</sup> on electrified sheilds	And you woke up and reaped the frightening result
	2c) <i>Zaghloul, you bumped your head on electric sheilds</i>	<i>And woke up to reap a horrifying result</i>
	جابوا البرق والرعد والليل الابي	٣/ راسي وام الدهر اخوه ياغيي
25:14	3a) Rāsī w imm-id-dahar ikhwi yā ghabī	Jābū-l-barī' w-ir-ra <sup>c</sup> d w-il-layl-il-‘abī
	3b) My head <sup>181</sup> and the mother of endless time are siblings, Stupid	They brought lightning, thunder and the proud night
	3c) <i>My head and the mother of endless time are siblings, Fool</i>	<i>They brought lightning, thunder and the proud night</i>
	وريح العواصف والعقل والموهبي	٤/ والبطش وصمود الشفار الطيبي
25:23	4a) W-il-baṭish w[i] ṣmūd-ish-shfār-iṭ-ṭayyibī	W rīḥ-il- <sup>c</sup> awāṣif w-il- <sup>c</sup> a'il w-il-mawhabī
	4b) And violence and the steadfastness of sharp <sup>182</sup> blades	And the wind of tempests and intelligence and talent
	4c) <i>And violence and the enduring sharp blades</i>	<i>And the wind of tempests, intelligence, and talent</i>

<sup>180</sup> Here we have the image of “banging your head” repeated once again.

<sup>181</sup> Here Mousa takes up the image of the “head” and begins to turn it in his own favor in the coming lines.

<sup>182</sup> *Tayyib* (kind, delicious, sweet) is an uncommon modifier for “blades.” In this context it means “sharp.”

	احتك البرق والرعد بالليل العبي	٥/ وتا تشوف وين راحوا بدقة مسرسي
25:31	5a) [i]W tā tshūf wan rāḥū bi-da''a <sup>183</sup> msarsabī	[i]Ḥtakk-il-bari' w-ir-ra <sup>c</sup> id bil-layl-il- <sup>c</sup> abī
	5b) And for you to see where they went in a worried blow	The lightning and thunder banged into the thick night <sup>184</sup>
	5c) <i>And so you could see where they went in a worried blow</i>	<i>The lightning and thunder banged into the thick night</i>
	والموهبة راحت تغذي المكتبي	٦/ والبطش يصرخ يا رياح تأهبي
25:39	6a) W-il-baṭish yişrukh yā riyāḥ [i]t'ahhabī	W-il-mawhabī rāḥit [i]tghazzī-l-maktabī
	6b) And violence shouts, "O winds, prepare yourselves" <sup>185</sup>	And talent went to feed the library <sup>186</sup>
	6c) <i>And violence shouted, "O winds, prepare yourselves!"</i>	<i>And talent went to nourish the library</i>
	ويفاجئ العالم بثورة لاهبي	٧/ وراح الصمود قبل التحدي يختبي
25:49	7a) W rāḥ-iş-şmūd 'abl-it-taḥaddī yikhtibī	W yfāji'-il- <sup>c</sup> ālam bi-sawra lāhibī
	7b) And steadfastness went before the challenge to hide itself	And surprise the world with a flaming revolution
	7c) <i>And before the duel steadfastness hid itself</i>	<i>And surprised the world with a fiery revolution</i>

<sup>183</sup> Another repetition of this word/image = *da''a* (hit, blow). This time it is used to extend the image of banging the head on electric shields introduced in line 2.

<sup>184</sup> Mousa remixes the images of lightning, thunder, and night, which he introduced earlier in line 3.

<sup>185</sup> The words for "violence" and "winds" are repeated here. These images were introduced in line 4.

<sup>186</sup> Mousa reuses the word/image for "talent" which was introduced in line 4 as well.

٨/ وما ضل غير العقل ناصبلك شرك

تا ينتهي منك بأخر تجريبي

25:56 8a) W ma ḡall ghayr-il-<sup>c</sup>a'il nāṣiblak sharak

Tā yintihī minnak bi-ākhir tajribī

8b) And nothing but brains<sup>187</sup> stayed to lay a snare for you

In order to finish with you with the final try

8c) *Brains was all that remained to lay a snare for you*

*And finish you off at the final ordeal*

### Choral Refrain:

تا ينتهي منك بأخر تجريبي (twice)

26:03

Tā yin ti hī min nak [i]bi –ā khir[i] ta jri bī (twice)

In order to finish with you at the final test

*And finish you off at the final ordeal*

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<sup>187</sup> Mousa reuses the word/image “brains” also introduced in line 4. This completes a very clever strategy used by Mousa in this stanza in which he begins by listing those items “his mind and the mother of endless time brought (invented).”

### 3.3.2.3. Verbal Duel Summary and Explication: Second Exchange [23:33 – 26:19]

Zaghloul's second turn is a six-line stanza of *ma'annā* featuring the end rhyme *-dā*. Unlike the rhymes of the previous stanzas, this one is not a grammatical suffix of any sort. Most of the rhyme words in this stanza are nouns: *ṣadā* (echo); *fidā* (sacrifice); *ghadā* (tomorrow/lunch); *radā* (ruin); *il-madā* (the expanse); *il-<sup>c</sup>idā* (the enemies); *ḥidā* (solitude); *ḥadā* (anyone); one is a verb: *badā* (appeared); and one is an adverb: *sidā* (uselessly). Zaghloul's pronunciation of the word *sudā* (or *sudan* in Fuṣḥā, meaning "uselessly" or "in vain") as *sidā* provides us with an example of poetic license. Zaghloul pronounces it this way in order not to disrupt the pattern of short vowels preceding the end-rhyme *-dā*, whereby all of the rhymes end with either *-adā* or *-idā*.

In terms of word play in this stanza, Zaghloul delivers a much-quoted line, which pivots on a homonym pun on the word *ghadā*: [cue to 23:46]

بعملك من القلب ترويقة وغدا	بتقدر عا بيتي تزورني اليوم وغدا
[i]Bti'dir <sup>c</sup> a baytī tzūrṇī-l-yawm w <b>ghadā</b>	Bi <sup>c</sup> millak [i]mnīl-'alb tirwī'a w <b>ghadā</b>
You can visit my home today and <b>tomorrow</b>	I'll make you from the heart breakfast and <b>lunch</b>

More impressive, perhaps, is the craft with which Zaghloul has constructed this stanza. Zaghloul frames his turn with one important goal: to take the head-bashing image of Mousa's previous clincher line and transform it into the new image of Mousa's empty head. With his clincher line already in mind, he sets the stage with each preceding line and hemistich, beginning with the echo image in the first hemistich. Zaghloul continues to insist that at Mishrif he was being a generous host, willing to sacrifice anything for his guest, even letting him devour his own heart. This is in contrast with the peril Mousa can expect to encounter at the Beit Mery fortress. Next,

Mousa's image of "bashing" Zaghloul's head against the fortress is echoed in Zaghloul's "knocking" on the fortress and is brilliantly transformed into the witty image of the fortress standing up in fright at finding itself all alone, that is, without any warriors to defend it. In the next line, Zaghloul goes in for the kill, so to speak, and creates a perfect metaphorical equation between the echo of his knocking on the empty fortress and the echo of his knocking on Mousa's empty head. The fortress is empty of warriors and Mousa's head is void of ideas.

Mousa's response is an eight-line stanza that utilizes the rhyme *-bī*. The *ī* sound at the end of a word is quite common in Lebanese dialect, making it conducive to rhyming and allowing Mousa to quickly construct several lines. It is the feminine suffix, *tā' marbūṭa*, found on nouns and adjectives and pronounced *ī* in Lebanese dialect, and is also the *nisba* (relative) adjective ending *ī* used for many adjectives in Arabic that are formed from nouns. The *ī* ending is also the first-person suffix pronoun meaning my or me, and it is the second person feminine verb suffix for imperative and present tense verbs as well. Certainly Mousa's choice of rhyme enables him to easily extend the number of lines in this stanza. Of Mousa's fifteen rhyme words in this stanza, ten can be classified into one of the grammatical categories listed. Nine are nouns or adjectives that end with the feminine suffix: *mu<sup>c</sup>jabī* (enamored), *mkahrabī* (electrified), *mir<sup>c</sup>ibī* (frightening), *ṭayyibī* (sweet/sharp), *mawhabī* (talent), *msarsabī* (worried), *maktabī* (library), *lāhibī* (flaming), *tajribī* (try/attempt); and one is an imperative verb: *t'ahhabī* (prepare yourselves). The remaining rhymes are nouns, verbs, and adjectives ending with *-bī*: *nabī* (prophet), *ghabī* (stupid), *'abī* (proud), *<sup>c</sup>abī* (thick), and *yikhtibī* (hides itself).

Mousa begins his turn by addressing the town of Mishrif once again and boasting as its "god" and "prophet" before turning his attention back to addressing Zaghloul. The images of head-bashing and electricity introduced in previous stanzas reappear in his second line when he



describes Zaghloul as having hit his head on a live wire. Mousa then tackles Zaghloul's accusation of being empty-headed by claiming that his "head and the mother of endless time" are siblings, and furthermore, Mousa transfers the empty head accusation to Zaghloul, bluntly calling him "stupid." Beginning in the second half of line 2, Mousa introduces a series of powerful items he has "brought" into being with his sibling "the mother of endless time": lightning, thunder, prideful night, violence, durable sharp blades, gusts of tempests, brains, and talent. In the successive lines leading up to the clincher line 8, Mousa describes a series of events leading to the dispatching of all the items except "brains," (i.e. Mousa's brains), which he says have stayed behind to lay a snare for Zaghloul and deliver the final blow. This completes a very clever *zajal* strategy used by Mousa in this stanza. Mousa's use of the word *Jābū* (they brought) in line 2 resonates with a particular type of *zajal* game called "*Jib-lī b-jib-lak*" meaning literally, "You bring me, I'll bring you." In this game, each poet delivers a stanza starting with the phrase "*Jib-lī something*" and ending with "*B-jib-lak its opposite*." Usually poets are very creative in the types of "somethings" they use to fill in the blanks, most often items that are impossible to get, such as, "Bring me fire from the waters and I'll bring you softness from the rock." Or as in these examples as quoted to me in a 2008 interview in Dar Ishmezzine, Lebanon, with the village poet Toufic °Abdo (aka: Bilbul al-Koura (Robin of the Koura)), the leader of *al-Jawqa al-Lubnāniyyi*:

جبلي من الأبيض بَنِي  
يدق ويرقص ويغني

Poet, you claim to be an artist  
And I'll bring you a 3-day-old boy

المشورين على صنين  
تصيف شهر بتنورين

يا شاعر كنك رسام  
بجبلك ابن ٣ ايام

So bring me from "white" some "brown"  
Who can play music, and sing and dance

جبلي نار من الثلجات  
بجبلك بلدة القبيات

Bring me fire from the ice and snow  
And I'll bring you the town of Qbayat

Spread atop Mount Sannine  
So it can summer in Tannourine

جبلي نابليون بالذات      يرجع يعشق جوزفين  
بجباك كل شي في نجومات      عالارض هدية مني

Bring me Napoleon in the flesh      To fall in love with Josephine once again  
And I'll bring you all the stars      Down to earth, a little present to you from me

Poets will sometimes go on for hours with this. Mousa frames his turn here by “bringing” a number of images (lightning, thunder, night, violence, steadfastness, winds, brains, and talent) and then sending all of them away except one (brains) that will be the magic weapon used to destroy his opponent.

### 3.3.3. Third Exchange

#### 3.3.3.1. Zaghoul

يا ويلهن شو تمرجحوا وشو تشرشحو

١/ موسى وقع بالفخ ورفاقو انحرو

26:20 1a) Mūsā wa'a<sup>c</sup> b-il-fakhkh w[i] rfā'ū [i]nmaḥū

Yā wayl-hun shū tmarjahū w shū tsharshahū

1b) Mousa fell into the trap and his buddies were obliterated

Pity them how they swung and became a laughing stock

1c) *Mousa fell into the trap and his buddies have been wiped out*

*A pity how they swung and became a laughing stock*

يا ويلهن شو تطوطحوا وشو تمرجحوا

١/ موسى وقع بالفخ ورفاقو انمحوا

26:33 1a')<sup>188</sup> Mūsā wa'a° b-il-fakhkh w[i] rfā'ū [i]nmaḥū

Yā wayl-hun shū tṭawṭaḥū<sup>189</sup> [i]w shū tmarjaḥū

1b') Mousa fell into the trap and his buddies were obliterated

Pity them how they lost their balance and swung

1c') *Mousa fell into the trap and his buddies have been wiped out*

*A pity how they lost their balance and swung*

بالكاد بالناصور تقدر تلمحو

٢/ يا قاصد تهدي النسر بجوانحو

26:46 2a) Yā 'āsid [i]tihadḍī-n-nisir bi-jwānḥū

Bil-kād bin-nāḍūr ti'dir tilmaḥū

2b) O he who aims to grab the eagle with his wings

Barely with binoculars can you see him

2c) *You who is bent on holding the eagle by the wings*

*You can barely see him with binoculars*

<sup>188</sup> Zaghoul begins to repeat his first line, which is something poets often do during the course of a duel. While repeating the line the poet is able to work out the details of his stanza without allowing there to be a silent pause that would interrupt the flow of the singing. In this case, when Zaghoul repeats his first line, he changes the words in the second hemistich as noted below. Ziadeh's transcript does not reflect the repetition of lines and gives the second hemistich as *يا دلهن شو تطوطحوا وشو تمرجحوا* *Yā dill-hun shū tṭawṭaḥū w shū tmarjaḥū*, which does not quite match up to either of the two versions sung by Zaghoul on the first delivery or on repetition.

<sup>189</sup> Another voice can be heard shouting "tmarjaḥū" here, presumably to draw Zaghoul's attention for having said "tṭawṭaḥū" instead of "tmarjaḥū" as he had on the first go. Zaghoul responds by using "tmarjaḥū" now as the rhyme word, thus changing another word from the original utterance. As it turns out, tṭawṭaḥū (to teeter) and "tmarjaḥū" (to sway back and forth) are a synonymous pair and go well together.

26:57 3a)<sup>190</sup> [i]B-ha-sh-shariḥ yallī °a-l-°a'il °am tishraḥū

Ti°bū yā Mūsa-n-nās °annak w-istaḥū

3b) Of this explanation about brains you are explaining

They're tired, Mousa, the people and are embarrassed

3c) *This explanation of yours about brains*

*People are tired of it, Mousa, and embarrassed for you*

بضطر للعالم سجلك افتحو

٤/ انضليت تجمع هالحساب وتطرحو

27:07 4a) Inḍallayt tijma° ha-l-[i]ḥsāb [i]w tiṭraḥū<sup>191</sup>

Biḍṭarr lil-°ālam sijillak iftaḥū

4b) If you continue adding this account and subtracting it

I will be forced to the world your register to open

4c) *If you go on adding and subtracting things*

*I'll be forced to open your record and show it to the world*

اللي توكلوا عامواهبك ما استفتحو

٥/ خلي المكاتب في كتبنا يفرحو

27:17 5a) Khallī-l-makātib fī kitibnā yifraḥū

[I]llī twakkalū °ā mwāḥbak ma-staftaḥū

5b) Let the libraries at our books rejoice

They who placed their faith in your talents did not gain a thing

5c) *Let the libraries enjoy our books*

*They who placed their faith in your talents did not gain a thing*

<sup>190</sup> This line was left out of Ziadeh's transcript.

<sup>191</sup> Note Zaghloul's use of the idiom "add and subtract." The idiomatic pair makes it easy for the poet to express the notion that no matter how many angles his opponent uses to analyze the matter, it's going to be in vain.

٦/ وعود افكارك بالوحي يتسلحوا

بنصب الشرك حرب الزجل ما بتريحو

27:25 6a)<sup>192</sup> W ʿawwid ifkarak bil-wahī yitsalahū

B-naṣb-ish-sharak ḥarb-iz-zajal ma btirbaḥū

6b) Familiarize your thoughts with inspiration to be armed

By setting traps the war of *zajal* you cannot win

6c) *Accustom your thinking to be armed with inspiration*

*Setting traps won't help you win the war of zajal*

تا يحط من حولو الشرك ما بنصحو

٧/ البيكون عندو عقل صاغ بمطرحو

27:36 7a) Il-bi-ykūn ʿindū ʿaʿil ṣāgh [i]b-maṭraḥū

Ta yḥuṭṭ min ḥawlu-sh-sharak mā binṣaḥū

7b) He who has a sound mind in its place

For him to place around him a trap I don't advise him

7c) *Whoever has a sound mind in its right place*

*I wouldn't advise him to place traps all around himself*

احلى ما نوصل للمخبى ونفضحو

٨/ لكن انت عن قصد حطيت الشرك

27:44 8a) Lākin init ʿan ʿaṣid ḥaṭṭayt-ish-sharak

Aḥlā mā nūṣal lil-[i]mkhabbā w nifḍaḥū

8b) But you on purpose you placed the trap

Better we don't reach the hidden thing and expose it

8c) *But you set the trap on purpose*

*So we wouldn't find your secret and expose you*

<sup>192</sup> This line was also left out of Ziadeh's transcript.

### Choral Refrain:

أحلى ما نوصل للمهخبى ونفضحو (twice)

27:53

Aḥ lā mā nū ṣal lil-[i]m[i] khab bā w[i] nif ḍa ḥū (twice)

Better we don't reach the hidden thing and expose it

*So we wouldn't find your secret and expose you*

### 3.3.3.2. Mousa

هي حكمة الحية اللي بدها تقفري

١/ اوخ... زغلول لا تغرك نعومة مظهري

28:10 1a) Ōkh...Zaghlūl lā tghirrak nu<sup>c</sup>ūmit mazḥarī

Hay ḥikmit-il-ḥayyi-llī bad-hā tiftirī

1b) Owkh..Zaghloul don't deceive you my soft appearance

This is the wisdom of the snake that wants to invent lies

1c) Owkh...Don't let my tender appearance deceive you, Zaghloul

*That is what we should learn from the conniving snake*

بتضل تنفيا بكرسة منبري

٢/ ان شذك مغنطيس المشتري

28:21 2a) In<sup>193</sup> shaddak maghnaṭīs-il-mushtarī

Bit-ḍall titfayyā b-kirsit manbarī

2b) If it pulls you the magnetism of Jupiter

You will still be in the shade of the chair of my pulpit

2c) *Even if the magnetism of Jupiter pulls you in*

*You'll still find yourself shaded by my throne up on the stage*

<sup>193</sup> There is a discrepancy between Ziadeh's transcript: ان جذبك ان شذك مغنطيس المشتري *In jazbak in shaddak maghnaṭīs-il-mushtarī* (If it attracts you and pulls you the magnetism of Jupiter) and what is heard on the recording, *Kan shaddak* (Had pulled you). Most likely, Mousa says "In kan shaddak" (If it pulled you) though "In" (If) is not audible.

28:31 3a) [i]W ma bsayyij ʿla ʿaʿil shāʿir jawharī

Fīhi-l-Muʿarrī w Bin Burud w-il-Buḥtarī

3b) And I do not fence off the gem of a mind of a poet

Within it<sup>194</sup> al- Muʿarrī<sup>195</sup> and Bin Burud<sup>196</sup> and al- Buḥtarī<sup>197</sup>

3c) *I wouldn't fence off a poet's gem of a mind*

*That stores in its depths the likes of Muʿarrī, Bin Burud, and Buḥtarī*

ونمل المعنى مونتو عن بيدري

٤/ وسارتر ونتشي وشكسبير العبقرى

28:41 4a) W Sārtir w Nitshī w Shakhisbīr<sup>198</sup>-il-ʿabʿarī

W Naml-il-maʿannā mūntū ʿan baydarī

4b) And Sartre and Nietzsche and Shakespeare the genius

And the ants of maʿannā their stores are from my threshing floors

4c) *And Sartre, Nietzsche, and that genius Shakespeare*

And the ants of maʿannā reap provisions from my threshing floors

<sup>194</sup> Here is another example of Mousa's clever use of listing strategies in which he begins with the image of three famous classical Arab poets hiding within his brain.

<sup>195</sup> The reference is to the great Arab poet of the medieval period, Abu al-ʿAla al-Maʿarri (973-1058), a blind Syrian poet known for his pessimism and originality. Note that Mousa mispronounces his name as al-Muʿarri.

<sup>196</sup> The reference is to the famous blind Umayyad poet Bashār Ibn Burd (714-784). Note that Mousa mispronounces the name as "Burud."

<sup>197</sup> The reference is to the famous ʿAbbāsīd poet al-Buḥturi (821 – 897). Note that Mousa mispronounces the name as "al-Buhtari."

<sup>198</sup> All three of these names are mispronounced to fit the meter.



28:50 5a) Ḥaṣṣanit<sup>199</sup> ʿaʿlī [i]mn-il-[i]hjūm-il-ʿaskarī

Mush khawf min Zaghlūl minʾādu ṭarī

5b) I fortified/entrenched my mind from military attack

Not fear from Zaghloul whose beak is tender<sup>200</sup>

5c) *I've fortified my mind against military attack*

*Not out of fear of Zaghloul with his tender beak*

29:02 6a) [i]W ta-tshūf shū mkhabbī ilak min maṣdarī

[i]Mkhabbī-lak il-mawt<sup>201</sup>-il-ʿanīf-il-barbarī

6b) And for you to see what I've hidden for you from my source<sup>202</sup>

I have hidden for you violent, barbaric death

6c) *Let me show you what I have hidden in my stores for you*

*I've got hidden for you a violent, barbaric death*

<sup>199</sup> Ziadeh's transcript gives سيجت Sayyajit (I fenced in) rather than حصنت Ḥaṣṣanit (I fortified/entrenched).

<sup>200</sup> Mousa is making fun of Zaghloul's penname which means "baby dove".

<sup>201</sup> Ziadeh's transcript gives الطعن aṭ-ṭaʿn (stabbing) rather than الموت al-mawt (death).

<sup>202</sup> Again Mousa sets up an opportunity to use the listing strategy in which he cleverly reveals the things he's got up his sleeve for Zaghloul. Listing does two things: builds a crescendo and provides opportunity to insert creative imagery.

وحكم اعدام البلاط القيصري

٧/ مخبيلك جروح الحسام العنتري

29:11 7a) [i]Mkhabbī-lak [i]jrūḥ-il-ḥusām-il-<sup>c</sup>antarī

W ḥikim <sup>c</sup>dām-il-[i]blāṭ-il-‘ayṣarī

7b) I have hidden for you the wounds of the Antari<sup>203</sup> sword

And the sentence of death of the palace of Caesar

7c) *And lacerations from the great sword of Antar*

*And a death sentence decree from Caesar's palace*

غسل بدمع الطير قلعة بيت مري

٨/ حتى بعد دماث ابطال الزمان

29:19 8a) Ḥattā ba<sup>c</sup>d dammāt abṭāl-iz-zamān

Ghassil b-dam<sup>c204</sup>-it-ṭayr ‘al<sup>c</sup>it Bet Mirī

8b) So that after the bloodshed of the heroes of the ages

I wash with the tears of the bird the castle of Beit Mery

8c) *So that finally after history's heroes and all their blood*

*I'll cleanse Beit Mery castle with the tears of a little bird*

### Choral Refrain:

غسل بدمع الطير قلعة بيت مري (twice)

29:26

Ghas sil [i] b -dam <sup>c</sup>-it- ṭay r[i] ‘al <sup>c</sup>it[i] Bet[i] Mi rī (twice)

I wash with the tears of the bird the castle of Beit Mery

*I'll cleanse Beit Mery castle with the tears of a little bird*

<sup>203</sup> Antar is the great 6<sup>th</sup>-century pre-Islamic Arab poet, knight, and hero Antara ibn Shaddad. Antar is memorialized in the voluminous epic *Sirat Antara*. See the English translation by Anna Nawolska.

<sup>204</sup> There is a discrepancy between Ziadeh's transcript, which gives the word “*damm*” (blood) here rather than what is heard on the recording, “*dam<sup>c</sup>*” (tears).

### 3.3.3.3. Verbal Duel Summary and Explication: Third Exchange [26:20 – 29:47]

Zaghloul responds this time with an eight-or nine-line stanza of *ma'annā*, depending on how one counts the lines since, in this particular turn, we have an example of a common practice among *zajal* poets, which is to repeat the first line (or any line for that matter) before continuing on and completing the stanza. This practice allows a poet to gather his thoughts while working out the details of his successive lines without there being a pause in the singing. Usually the repeated line matches exactly the original version, but occasionally, the poet may change a word or two upon repetition, which is the case in this particular example:

	يا ويلهن شو تمرجحوا وشو تشرشحو	١ / موسى وقع بالفخ ورفاقو انمحو
26:20	1a) Mūsā wa'a <sup>c</sup> b-il-fakhkh w[i] rfā'ū [i]nmaḥū	Yā wayl-hun shū <b>tmarjaḥū</b> w shū <b>tsharshaḥū</b>
	1b) Mousa fell into the trap and his buddies were obliterated	Pity them how they swung and became a laughing stock
	يا ويلهن شو تطوطحو وشو تمرجحوا	١ / موسى وقع بالفخ ورفاقو انمحو
26:33	1a') Mūsā wa'a <sup>c</sup> b-il-fakhkh w[i] rfā'ū [i]nmaḥū	Yā wayl-hun shū <b>tṭawṭaḥū</b> [i]w shū <b>tmarjaḥū</b>
	1b') Mousa fell into the trap and his buddies were obliterated	Pity them how they lost their balance and swung

We see that in the second hemistich of line 1', *tmarjaḥū* (they swung) was replaced with *tṭawṭaḥū* (they lost their balance) and *tsharshaḥū* (they became a laughing stock) was replaced with *tmarjaḥū* (they swung). Clearly, the metrical qualities of the exchanged words are identical, and the meanings are similar. It is interesting to note that when Zaghloul sings line 1' and he introduces *tṭawṭaḥū* (they lost their balance) in the second hemistich, another voice (perhaps one of his teammates or one of the *riddādi*) can be heard shouting, “*tmarjaḥū!*” (They swung!),

presumably to draw Zaghoul's attention for having said “*tṭawṭaḥū*” (they lost their balance; they teetered) instead of “*tmarjaḥū*” as he had on the first go. Zaghoul reacts to this by uttering “*tmarjaḥū*” now as the rhyme word, thus changing another word from the original utterance. As it turns out, *tṭawṭaḥū* (they teetered) and *tmarjaḥū* (to sway back and forth) are a synonymous pair that go well together and provide a metrically equivalent substitution for the original line.

In this stanza, Zaghoul employs the end-rhyme *-ḥū*, which features the long vowel *ū*, a grammatical suffix with multiple uses that facilitates the oral composition process. All of Zaghoul's rhymes in this stanza make use of this aspect of his chosen rhyme and can be classified as follows:

Ends with <i>ū</i> as suffix pronoun “his,” “him,” “its,” or “it”	Ends with <i>ū</i> as third-person plural verb suffix
jwānḥū (his wings)	[i]nmaḥū (they were obliterated)
tilmaḥū (you see him)	tsharshaḥū (they became a laughing stock)
tishraḥū (you are explaining it)	tmarjaḥū (they swung back and forth)
tiṭraḥū (subtracting it)	istaḥū (they were embarrassed)
iftaḥū (I open it)	yifraḥū (they rejoice)
ma btirbaḥū (you don't win it)	ma-staftaḥū (they didn't gain anything)
maṭraḥū (its place)	yitsalaḥū (they take up arms)
mā binṣaḥū (I don't advise him)	
nifḍaḥū (we expose it)	

Just as we have seen in previous turns, Zaghoul's stanza is constructed with a particular strategy in mind. He focuses on the word *sharak* and the image of the “snare” that came at the

end of Mousa's turn. His plan is to recast the snare Mousa claims to have laid for Zaghoul as a snare Mousa has actually laid for the audience, like a booby-trap, to prevent them from discovering his dark secrets. Also in a manner similar to his construction of the second stanza, Zaghoul introduces a "trap" in the first line and foreshadows for us the argument of his final clincher line by stating clearly "Mousa has fallen into the trap." In other words, by merely uttering the word "snare" Mousa has fallen into his own "trap." Zaghoul goes on to poke holes in Mousa's previous stanza's argument. His description of Mousa's companions as "teetering laughingstocks" is meant to ridicule Mousa's dizzying listing of images and leads nicely into the next series of lines. Zaghoul tells Mousa to quit with the tiresome analysis, all the "adding and subtracting," and stop embarrassing himself with confusing arguments. He slings a witty insult in line 2 when he says "you think you can restrain the eagle (i.e. Zaghoul)? You can't even spy him out with a pair of binoculars!" It is also an opportunity for Zaghoul to label himself as "the eagle." Mousa often belittles Zaghoul by making fun of his penname and calling him a "little bird" or a "baby bird," as we will see in his response.

Mousa's response is an eight-line stanza of *ma<sup>c</sup>anna* with end rhyme *-rī*. As mentioned earlier, the final *ī* is a grammatical suffix, which means "my", or "me" or is the relative adjective suffix used for turning certain nouns into adjectives, similar in English to the suffix *-like* or *-ish* or *-ic*. In this stanza, Mousa has several rhymes based on these two meanings of the grammatical suffix *ī*: *mazharī* (my appearance), *manbarī* (my pulpit), *jawharī* (gem-like), *‘ab‘arī* (genius-like), *baydarī* (my threshing floor), *‘askarī* (soldier-like, military), *maṣdarī* (my source), *barbarī* (barbaric), *‘antarī* (Antar-like), *-‘ayṣarī* (Cesar-like). His clincher rhyme is a return to the place name Beit Mery, which is always a good strategy for poets to use since mentioning the name of

the town where the duel is taking place is a gesture that honors the hosts and appeals to the audience.

Mousa's third stanza provides an excellent illustration of a very useful oral composition strategy I call "listing." Mousa cleverly uses this strategy twice in this stanza, first beginning in line 3 where he introduces the image of three famous classical Arab poets "hiding within his brain": the great blind Arab poet of the medieval period, Abu al-'Ala al-Ma'arri (973-1058), the famous blind Umayyad poet Bashār Ibn Burd (714-784), and the famous 'Abbāsīd poet al-Buḥturi (821 – 897). He goes on in successive lines to add some famous western geniuses to his list of his brain's contents: Sartre and Nietzsche and Shakespeare. This name-dropping is Mousa's way of showing his broad background in Arab and western poetry and thought. It is worth noting also that each of the famous names Mousa mentions in these lines is slightly mispronounced in some way or other so it will fit the metrical mold of his verse. The second example of listing begins in line 6 when Mousa lays out for Zaghoul all the horrible and violent things he has "up his sleeve" for him: violent, barbaric death; lacerations from the great sword of Antar; and a death sentence decree straight from Caesar's palace. Mousa ends his stanza the way he began it – by belittling Zaghoul and his "tender beak" and threatening to cleanse Beit Mery with the "tears of a little bird."

### 3.3.4. Fourth Exchange

#### 3.3.4.1. Zaghloul

ونقي اللي بعدو فج من يلي استوى

١/ فجّر براكينك يا خط الاستوا

29:48 1a) Fajjir [i]brākīnak ya khaṭṭ-il-istiwā

W na'ʾī-llī ba<sup>c</sup>d-u fajj min yallī-stawā<sup>205</sup>

1b) Explode your volcanoes<sup>206</sup>, O line of the equator

And separate that which is still unripe from that which ripened

1c) *Detonate your volcanoes, Equator*

*And sift out the unripe from that which has ripened*

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<sup>205</sup> Zaghloul gets a strong applause for the explosiveness of this line as well as for the pun on the two rhyme words, “istiwā” (equality/part of term for the equator, literally “line of equality” in Arabic) and “istawā” (became ripe). This kind of word play using cognates appears to be one of Zaghloul’s favorite strategies. Also note he ends the line with one of the longest melismas in the duel.

<sup>206</sup> Zaghloul matches the meaning of his words with an explosive rendition in singing that the audience responds to fervently.

30:02 2a)<sup>207</sup> Iṭ-ṭayr-il-‘aṣadt-ū id-dahir ‘an fī‘l-ū rawā

W biyzalzil-il-‘al‘a izā ṣawt-ū dawā

2b) The bird you referred to Time his doings narrated

And will shake the citadel if his voice resounds<sup>208</sup>

2c) *That bird you mentioned, his feats are recorded in the annals of Time*

*And this whole fortress will tremble and quake on hearing his voice*

30:13 3a) [i]W law jibit<sup>209</sup> shafrit sayf Hānī-l-ma-ltawā

W saḥbit ‘aṣā Mūsā [i]w ḥanash wādī ṭiwā

3b) And even if you bring the sharp edge of Hani’s<sup>210</sup> sword that never bent

And the quick draw of Moses’ staff and the serpent of The Sacred Valley of Tuwa

3c) *And even if you were to brandish the sharp edge of Hannibal’s unbending sword*

*Or unsheathe Moses’ staff and the serpent of the Sacred Valley of Tuwa*

<sup>207</sup> This line is given as the 3<sup>rd</sup> line rather than the 2<sup>nd</sup> line in Ziadeh’s transcript. Ziadeh quotes a line that Zaghoul does not actually say: يا مفتكر عاادم تعمل مستوى//لا فيك دم ولا طلع منك نوى (O you who thinks blood makes a high social level//You don’t have any blood in you and no fruits have ever come from you).

<sup>208</sup> Zaghoul again echoes the meaning of his words with the sound of his voice.

<sup>209</sup> Here again is the verb “*jibit*” (you bring) which is one of many repeated words that are tossed back and forth during the duel. Note that this particular verb is a convenient way for the poet to begin a clever and creative list, which Zaghoul does here as he lists the things Mousa could “bring” to the battle. Ultimately, we can expect none of these items to be of any use, and Zaghoul will use this listing strategy to build a crescendo and cut down his opponent.

<sup>210</sup> Zaghoul is most likely referring to the great Phoenician/Lebanese conqueror Hannibal.



وعصفة هوا الأصفر الدما لها دوا

٤/ ودرع النبي داود هالكلو قوى

30:23 4a) [i]W dir<sup>c</sup>-in-nabī Dāwūd ha-l-kill-ū qiwā

W <sup>c</sup>aşfit hawā-l-aşfar-il-mā il-hā dawā<sup>211</sup>

4b) And the armor of the Prophet David which is all strength

And a blow of that yellow wind<sup>212</sup> which has no remedy

وشبكة ترد الموت عنك والهوا

٥/ وعسكر مرود الجن كل فوج بلوا

30:32 5a) [i]W <sup>c</sup>askar [i]mrūd-il-jinn kill fawj [i]b-liwā

W shabkī tridd-il-mawt <sup>c</sup>annak w-il-hawā

5b) And an army of giant *jinns* each battalion a brigade

And a net to ward off death from you and the wind<sup>213</sup>

5c) *And an army of giant jinns, each battalion a brigade*

*And a safety net to save you from death and dangerous winds*

وطمك واخلط عضمك ولحمك سوا

٦/ مش تاركك تا اهدم القلعة عليك

30:40 6a) Mish tārkaḳ tā ihdum-il-‘al‘a ‘layk

W ṭummaḳ w ikhlut <sup>c</sup>aḍmaḳ w laḥmaḳ sawā

6b) I am not leaving you until I destroy the fortress on you

And bury you and mix your bones and flesh together

6c) *I’m not letting up ‘til I bring this castle down on you*

*And bury you and mix your bones together with your flesh*

<sup>211</sup> Zaghoul has already used the homonym *dawā* in line 2, second hemistich, to mean “resound.” This is another example of Zaghoul’s tendency to word play of this type. In this line *dawā* means “medicine/cure.”

<sup>212</sup> The “yellow wind” is the Arabic term for “the plague.”

<sup>213</sup> Here is the last image in Zaghoul’s list. Note that the examples are items from a shared cultural knowledge that the audience will recognize no matter their level of education.

### Choral Refrain:

وطمك واخلط عضمك ولحمك سوا (twice)

30:49

W ʔum mak w[i] ikhlut ʕad [i] mak w lah [i] mak [i] sa wā (twice)

And bury you and mix your bones and flesh together

*And bury you and mix your bones together with your flesh*

### 3.3.4.2. Mousa

رح تأسف اللجنة على مشوارها

١/ أخ...زغلول عمق والمعاني اختارها

158

31:08 1a) Ōkh...Zaghlūl ʕamma' w-il-maʕānī-khtār-hā

Raḥ ti'suf-il-lijni ʕalā mishwār-hā

1b) Owkh...Zaghloul delved deep and the meanings he chose

The judging panel will regret its trip

1c) *Owkh...Zaghloul delved deep into ideas of his choosing*

*The judges are going to regret having come all this way*

بتزید قیمتها بنظر خمارها

31:22 2a)<sup>214</sup>[i]L-khamra izā byit'al [i]ktīr ʿayār-hā

2b) The wine if becomes very heavy its potency

2c) *If a wine's potency becomes very strong*

تا الريح تعمي الكوكب من غبارها

31:30 3a) Faylit [i]nsūr-ish-shiʿr min awkār-hā

3b) Release the eagles of poetry from their lairs

3c) *Release the eagles of poetry from their lairs*

٢/ الخمرة اذا بيتقل كثير عيارها

Bitzīd ʿīmit-hā b-naẓar khimmār[i]-hā

Its value increases in the view of its vintners<sup>215</sup>

*Its value increases in the eyes of its vintners*

٣/ فيلت نسور الشعر من اوكارها

Ta-r-rīḥ tiʿmī-l-kawkab [i]mn-[i]ghbār-hā

So the wind can blind the planet with its dust<sup>216</sup>

*So the wind can blind the planet with its dust*

<sup>214</sup> This line is left out of Ziadeh's transcript.

<sup>215</sup> This line seems to be "filler"; it doesn't follow logically from the argument.

<sup>216</sup> This line, though full of interesting imagery, also seems to be outside the main argument. These types of "filler" lines are part and parcel of the oral-formulaic composition process that allow the poets to build up to the clincher line.

31:41 4a)<sup>217</sup> Jibnā<sup>218</sup> ʿaṣā Mūsā w siḥir asrār-hā

Āyāt Dāwūd-in-nabī w mizmār-hā

4b) We brought Moses's staff and the magic of its secrets

Verses of David the Prophet and their lyre

4c) *We've brought Moses's staff and the magic of its secrets*

*Verses from David the Prophet and his lyre*

موسى ملكها وعزها وشعارها

٥/ وهالقلعة الريشي نتر عاجارها

31:50 5a) W ha-l-ʿalʿit-il-rīshī natar ʿā ḥjār-hā

Mūsā malak-hā w ʿizz-hā [i]w shʿār-hā

5b) And this fortress that my feathers brushed off on its stones

Mousa is its king and its glory and its motto

5c) *And this fortress whose stones my feathers often brushed*

*Mousa is its king and its glory and its motto*

وصدره درع مقدود من اسوارها

٦/ وسيد مواقعها وحامي ديارها

31:59 6a) [i]W sayyid mawāʾif-hā w ḥāmī dyār-hā

W ṣadrū diri<sup>c</sup> maʾdūd min aswār-hā

6b) And master of its decisions and protector of its grounds

And his chest a plate of armor cut from its enclosures

6c) *The master of its stances and protector of its grounds*

*His chest is a plate of armor sliced from its ramparts*

<sup>217</sup> This line was left out of Ziadeh's transcription.

<sup>218</sup> Another example of listing starts with the verb “*Jibna*” (we brought).

وبيناسبك يا طير نيل جوارها

٧/ لكن جنابك طير شؤم وزارها

32:08 7a) Lākin janābak ṭayr shu'm [i]w zār-hā

W biynāsbak yā ṭayr nayl<sup>219</sup> [i]jwār-hā

7b) But you, sir, are a bird of bad omen and visited it

And it suits you, bird, to win its neighborhood

7c) *But you, sir, are a bird of bad omen who happened to visit*

*It would suit you, bird, to have the privilege to be here*

تا تضل ترقص عا زوايا عمارها

٨/ تا يموت الملك وتصير هالقلعة خراب

32:16 8a) Tā ymūt-il-malak w ṭṣīr ha-l-‘al‘a kharāb

Ta-tḍall tir'uṣ ‘ā zwāyā ‘mār-hā

8b) So that the king dies and this castle becomes ruins

So you can go on dancing on the corners of its building

8c) *For the king to die and this castle to fall into ruin*

*So you can dance on the corners of its dilapidated foundation*

### Choral Refrain:

تا تضل ترقص عا زوايا عمارها (twice)

32:22

Ta- tḍall [i] tir'uṣ [i] ‘ā z[a] wā yā ‘mār [i] -hā (twice)

So you can go on dancing on the corners of its building

*So you could dance on the corners of its dilapidated foundation*

<sup>219</sup> Ziadeh's transcription gives “*bayn jwār-hā*” (amidst its neighborhood) rather than “*nayl jwār-hā*” (win its neighborhood).

### 3.3.4.3. Verbal Duel Summary and Explication: Fourth Exchange [29:48 – 32:39]

Zaghloul opens his fourth stanza with a powerful burst of vocal energy and verbal cleverness. He booms with confidence as he commands the equator to “detonate the volcanoes!” and he completes his *maṭlaʿ* with a pun. Zaghloul receives a strong applause for the onomatopoeic matching of his words with his explosive singing, as well as for the pun on the two rhyme words, *istiwā* (equality/part of term for the equator, literally “line of equality” in Arabic) and *istawā* (became ripe). It is quickly becoming apparent that this kind of word play using homonyms and cognates is one of Zaghloul’s favorite strategies. It is also clear that Zaghloul is repeatedly able to use his strong and beautiful singing voice to his advantage. Indeed, he ends the opening line with one of the longest melismata in the duel [cue to 29:48]. Similarly, at the end of line 2, Zaghloul lets his voice resound as he sings out the phrase *ṣawt-ū dawā* (his voice resounded). His strike on Mousa is firm, decisive, and completely undermines Mousa’s image of “a little bird’s tears,” at the end of the third exchange. Zaghloul is able to negate Mousa’s claim, but not by saying he is not a “little bird” with “a tender beak,” but by showing his strength with the powerful combination of his voice and wit.

As Zaghloul continues through the successive lines of his six-line stanza based on the rhyme *-wā*, he picks up Mousa’s listing strategy and swats it back at him. Like Mousa, he begins his list with mentioning the verb *jibit* (in the phrase *law jibit*, even if you *brought*). He tells Mousa that even if he were to bring all of the things on this new list - the sharp edge of Hannibal’s unbending sword, Moses’ staff and the serpent, the armor of David the Prophet, a whiff of the yellow wind (i.e. the plague), an army of giant *jinn*s, and a safety net – he won’t be able to withstand Zaghloul’s power and wrath.

Mousa replies to Zaghoul with an eight-line stanza based on the rhyme *-ār-hā*. The *hā* ending is the pronoun suffix meaning “her,” “it,” “its,” “them,” or “their,” and all of Mousa’s rhymes are used in this way. It is interesting that Mousa pronounces the ending as he does, articulating the “*h*” which is normally silent in Lebanese dialect.

We see in Mousa’s stanza some of the images introduced in previous stanzas reappearing. For example, near the end of the stanza, Mousa pursues the “bird” label, this time calling Zaghoul a “bird of bad omen” who is bent on destroying the fortress (another repeated image/word). In contrast, Mousa describes himself with positive bird imagery in line 5 when he says, “And this fortress whose stones my feathers have often brushed.” Mousa also revives the image of himself as the “king” (previously he addressed Beit Mery fortress “inside whose walls they have resumed crowning the king), and begins another list introduced by the verb *Jibnā* (We brought) including “Moses’ staff” and “Verses from David the Prophet,” both of which Zaghoul included in his list of items that would be of no use to Mousa against Zaghoul’s wrath. Mousa’s strategy is to portray Zaghoul as a destroyer of those great and powerful men and items, to say that Mousa, out of benevolence, brought forth the staff “and the magic of its secrets,” the verses “and the lyre.” He claims again to be the king and master of the fortress, protector of its grounds, wearer of armor (resonates also with the “armor of David the Prophet” in Zaghoul’s list) hewn from the very same stone as the fortress. All of this Mousa mentions in order to point his finger at Zaghoul and accuse him of being a “bird of bad omen” come to destroy Beit Mery and “dance on its dilapidated foundation.”

### 3.3.5. Fifth Exchange

#### 3.3.5.1. Zaghloul

صار ينسمى شاعر رفيع المنزلي

١/ مش كل من عا كرسة المنبر علي

32:40 1a) Mish kill min ʿā kirsit-il-manbar ʿilī

Şār yinsama shāʿir raftʿ-il-manzalī

1b) Not everyone who upon the chair of the stage climbed

Became called a poet fine of rank

1c) *Not everyone who took a seat upon the stage*

*Was called a poet of high prestige*

من قبل ما بالارض اعمل زلزلي

٢/ يا نجوم وج الصبح عالحفة انزلي

32:52 2a) Ya njūm wīj-iş-şubuh ʿa-l-ḥafl- inzilī

Min ʿabil-ma bil-arḍ ʿaʿmil zalzalī

2b) O stars, the face of morning onto the party descend

Before on the ground/earth I make an earthquake

2c) *O stars, as morning's face appears, descend to this party*

*Before I cause an earthquake here on the ground*

من قبل ما بالارض اعمل زلزلي

٢/ يا نجوم وج الصبح عالارض انزلي

33:03 2a')<sup>220</sup> Ya njūm wīj-iş-şubuh ʿa-l-arḍ inzalī

Min ʿabil-ma bil-arḍ ʿaʿmil zalzalī

2b') O stars, the face of morning onto the ground descend

Before on the ground/earth I make an earthquake

2c') *O stars, as morning's face appears, descend to earth*

*Before I cause an earthquake here on the ground*

<sup>220</sup> Zaghloul repeats his second line. On the repeat, he changes عالحفة *ʿal-ḥaflī* (to the party) to *ʿal-arḍ* (to the ground).



33:13 3a) Il-lijni–l-ijit<sup>221</sup> °a dayr ‘al°a mbakkalī

Tā yiḥimlū b-na°shak<sup>222</sup> bi-ākhir marḥalī

3b) The panel that came to a packed citadel monastery

To carry your coffin during the final segment

3c) *The judges who came to this packed monastery*

*Will bear your coffin during the final segment*

وعا هيك نوع نسور شو هالبهيلي

٤ / نحنا زغاليل الشعر والترغلي

33:21 4a)<sup>223</sup> Niḥnā zghālīl-ish-shi°r w-it-targhalī

W °ā hayk naw° nsūr shū ha-l-bahdalī

4b) We are the baby doves of poetry and cooing

And on this type of eagles/vultures what an embarrassment

4c) *We are the cooing baby doves of poetry*

*What a shame to waste it on these vultures*

<sup>221</sup> In Ziadeh’s transcript *Il-lijni–l-ijit* (the judging panel that came here) is given as *In-nās-il-ijū* (the people who came here).

<sup>222</sup> In Ziadeh’s transcript, *Tā yiḥimlū b-na°shak* (to carry your coffin) is given as *Tā yiwadda°ū rūḥak* (to bid farewell to your soul).

<sup>223</sup> Ziadeh quotes an extraneous line here as line 4: لو ما انا وجودي بصفي الاولي لا تغذبوا لهون ولا حلّوا المشكلي *Law ma ana wujūdī bi-ṣaffī-l-ūlī // La t°azzabū la hawn w lā ḥallū-l-mishkilī* (If not for my presence here at the head of the table//They would not have troubled themselves to come here and solve the problem) and quotes the actual line 4 as sung by Zaghloul as line 5. The actual line 5 sung by Zaghloul is left out of Ziadeh’s transcript.

اتركني انا ارقص وامشي حنجلي

33:32 5a) Rūḥ ikhtifī khallī-l-ḥa't'a tinjilī

5b) Go disappear let truth be revealed

5c) *Go disappear, let truth shine forth*

الجالس عا كرسة متختخة ومهللي

33:44 6a) Awwal ʿā ākhir yā malak dār-il-bilī

6b) First to last, O king of the house of decay

6c) *From beginning to end, King of the house of decay*

والزلغطة والرقص والدبكة إلي

33:52 7a) Raḥ tiṭlaʿ-il-mawtī bi-ha-l-ḥaflī ilak

7b) Will come out the death at this party for you

7c) *At this duel, death is going to be your prize*

٥/ روح اختفي خلي الحقيقة تنجلي

Triknī anā ur'uṣ w imshī ḥanjālī

Leave me to dance and strut and prance around

*And leave me to my dancing and strutting and prancing*

٦/ اول عا آخر يا ملك دار البلي

L-Jālis ʿā kirsī mtakhtakha w[i] mhalhalī

Sitting on a chair all worn out and threadbare

*You're sitting on a broken, worn-out chair*

٧/ رح تطلع الموتة بهالحفلة إلك

W-il-zalghaṭā w-ir-ra'is w-id-dabkī ilī

And the ululating and dancing and dabke<sup>224</sup>/stomping for me

*And the ululating, dancing, and dabke will be mine*

<sup>224</sup> Traditional type of dancing involving a lot of stomping (from which its name is derived – *dabaka* means to stomp) done at major celebrations.

### Choral Refrain:

والزلغطة والرقص والدبكة إلي (twice)

34:00

W-il -zal gh aṭā w-ir -ra'is̥ [i] w[i]-id-dab [i]kī i lī (twice)

And the ululating and dancing and stomping for me

*And the ululating, dancing, and dabke will be mine*

### 3.3.5.2. Mousa

قيموا الزغبيي لكون ارحب وانقلوا

١/اوخ... يا جوانح الالهام رّفّوا وانزلوا

34:18 1a) Ōkh...Yā jwāniḥ-il-ilhām riffū w-inzalū

Īmū-z-zghaybī-l-kawn arḥab w-in'ilū

1b) Owkh...O wings of inspiration flap and descend

Pick up the Zoghaybi<sup>225</sup> to a wider universe and move him

1c) Owkh...Flutter, O wings of inspiration, and swoop down

Lift the Zoghaybi take him to a wider world

<sup>225</sup> The reference is to Mousa Zoghayb himself, of course. Also, the literal meaning of *zoghayb* is a diminutive of *zaghāb*, meaning the soft downy feathers of a baby bird.

- حَرِّم جلابيط المناير يعتلوا      ٢/ النسر التركتو يا خليل بمعقلو
- 34:30 2a) In-nisr-il-taraktū yā Khalīl [i]b-ma<sup>°</sup>alū      Ḥarrām [i]jlābīt-il-manābir yi<sup>°</sup>tīlū
- 2b) The eagle you left, O Khalīl<sup>226</sup>, is in his fortress      He forbid the baby chicks of the stages to go on
- 2c) *Don't worry, Khalil, the eagle you left is still in his fortress      Forbidding the baby chicks of zajal to go on the pupit*
- اركعلو وشو بيريد منك اسألو      ٣/ ز غلول مولاك الملك ما بتجهلو
- 34:42 3a) Zaghlūl mawlāk-il-malak mā b-tijhalū      Rka<sup>°</sup>lū w shū byrīd minnak 'is'alū
- 3b) Zaghloul, your master the king you don't ignore him      Kneel to him and whatever he wants from you ask him
- 3c) *Zaghloul, don't play dumb before your master the king      Get down on your knees, beg to know what he demands of you*
- يرعبك وينزلك من منخلو      ٤/ وان مات الملك يضل اسمو بمنزلو
- 34:51 4a) W in māt-il-malak<sup>227</sup> biyḍall ismū b-manzalū      Yiri<sup>°</sup>bak w ynazzlak min minkhilū
- 4b) And if the king dies his name will remain in its high place      Frightening you and dropping you through its sieve
- 4c) *And if the king dies, his name will remain in its high place      Frightening you and pouring you through the sieve*

<sup>226</sup> Mousa is referring to the great *zajal* poet and his mentor Khalil Rukuz, mentioned earlier.

<sup>227</sup> Ziadeh's transcript gives *W law māt baddū* (And even if he were to die he would...) rather than *W in māt-il-malak* (If the king were to die...)

دبكة ورقص وضيئوا خمر وحلو

٥/ جمع شبابك يوم دفني واعملوا

34:59 5a) Jammi<sup>c</sup> shabābak yawm dafnī wi <sup>c</sup>milū

Dabkī w ra's w ḍayyḥū khamr [i]w ḥilū

5b) Gather your youths the day of my burial and do<sup>228</sup>

a dabkeh and dance<sup>229</sup> and offer wine and sweets to the guests<sup>230</sup>

5c) *Gather up your youths the day of my burial and do*

*dabkeh dancing, and give wine and sweets to the guests*

مش رح بخليكن الفرحة تكملوا

٦/ بس مهما ترلغطوا وتهللوا

35:08 6a) Bas mahmā tzalighṭū w[i]t-halhilū

Mish raḥ [i]bkhallīkun-il-farḥa tkammilū

6b) But no matter how much you ululate and celebrate

I will not allow you the joy to finish

6c) *But no matter how much you ululate and celebrate*

*I will not allow you to savor the joy*

ورجعوا بيوم قيامتو سجدوا إلو

٧/ مثل اليهود الزلغطوا بدين المسيح

35:16 7a) Mitl-il-yahūd [i]l-zalghaṭū b-dafn-il-masīḥ

[i]W rij<sup>c</sup>ū bi-yawm [i]yāmtū sajjdū ilū

7b) Like the Jews who ululated at the burial of Christ

And went back on the day of his rising knelt in worship to him

7c) *Just like the Jews who ululated at Christ's burial*

*Only to bow down and worship him the day of his resurrection*

<sup>228</sup> Here is an example of enjambment across the hemistichs.

<sup>229</sup> Note that Mousa is using the same images Zaghoul used in the clincher line of his last stanza. Again, this strategy allows the poet to take his opponent's words and turn them against him.

<sup>230</sup> It is traditional for guests attending a burial to be offered food and drink.

**Choral Refrain:**

ورجعوا بيوم قيامتو سجدوا إلو (twice)

35:24

[i]W rij<sup>c</sup>ū bi-yawm [i]‘yāmtū sajjdū ilū (twice)

And went back on the day of his rising knelt in worship to him

*Only to bow down and worship him the day of his resurrection*

### 3.3.5.3. Verbal Duel Summary and Explication: Fifth Exchange [32:40 – 35:41]

Zaghloul's fifth stanza consists of seven lines with end rhyme *-lī*. Once again, we see the usefulness of grammatical suffixes. This one, *lī*, which was described earlier relative to Mousa's rhyme (*-bī*) in the second exchange, can mean "my," "me," or can be the Lebanese pronunciation of the feminine noun or adjective suffix *tā' marbūṭa*, or the relative adjective suffix comparable to the English *-ish*, *-like*, *-ic*, or the verb suffix for second person feminine. In this particular stanza, Zaghloul exploits this ten times: *manzalī* (rank; feminine suffix), *inzilī* (descend; verb 2<sup>nd</sup> person feminine), *zalzalī* (earthquake; feminine suffix), *mbakkalī* (packed; feminine suffix), *marḥalī* (segment; feminine suffix), *targhalī* (cooing; feminine suffix), *bahdalī* (embarrassment; feminine suffix), *ḥanjālī* (prancing; feminine suffix), *mhalhalī* (threadbare; feminine suffix), and *ilī* (for me; pronoun suffix).

Once again, Zaghloul frames his stanza around capitalizing on Mousa's last image – that of Zaghloul "dancing on the corners of the dilapidated fortress" and turning it on its head. In line 2, which is another example of a poet repeating one of his lines before continuing through to the end of the stanza, Zaghloul calls out to the morning stars that have begun to appear, commanding them to come down before he causes an earthquake. This resonates with the opening of his previous turn in which he called on the equator to "detonate its volcanoes." Also as before, Zaghloul lets his voice ring out extensively as he sings this line and conjures these images, not once, but twice. Having thus asserted himself and displayed his poetic might, he tells Mousa to let him "dance and prance around" proudly, and then begins dismantling Mousa's argument. In the previous stanza, Mousa made himself "the King of Beit Mery fortress" and accused Zaghloul of being a destroyer. Zaghloul now mocks Mousa, calling him, "the King of the house of decay," whose throne is "threadbare and falling apart" (presumably from so much sitting on his

bottom doing nothing), and who will end up in a coffin, carried by the judges of *zajal* as pallbearers by the end of the night. Also over the course of the stanza Zaghoul revives the bird imagery and calls himself and his *jawqa* companions “the baby doves of poetry and cooing,” and Mousa and his crew, “a flock of vultures.” Finally, Zaghoul finishes his stanza with a sting that is especially effective because Mousa’s image of Zaghoul dancing on the dilapidated fortress is now turned into Zaghoul’s prize for winning the duel – dancing and ululating at the funeral for Mousa, the King of Decay. Also, the manner in which Zaghoul’s final line is constructed contributes in a big way to its effectiveness. He sets up the final word “*ilī*” (for me) as the logical subordinate clause to go with “*ilak*” (for you) from the first hemistich (“Death will be for you”), so that when he reaches “*ilī*” at the end of the stanza, the audience is easily able to anticipate it and eagerly joins in singing the end of the line (“And ululating and dancing will be for me!”) along with Zaghoul and then again along with the *riddādi*. This is an excellent way to draw the audience in and gain their allegiance as they are enticed into participating in the duel with their own voices.

Mousa’s response is a seven-line stanza of *ma<sup>c</sup>annā* with end rhyme –*lū*. As mentioned earlier, the *ū* ending is also a multipurpose grammatical suffix which functions as a pronoun suffix meaning “him,” “his,” “it,” or “its,” or as a second or third person plural verb suffix. With the exception of *hilū* (sweets), Mousa employs one of these possibilities in all of his rhymes: *inzalū* (you (pl.) descend; verb suffix), *in’ilū* (you (pl.) move him; verb and pronoun suffix), *ma<sup>c</sup>’alū* (his fortress; pronoun suffix), *yi<sup>c</sup>tilū* (they go up; verb suffix), *tijhalū* (you (pl.) ignore; verb suffix), *’is’alū* (you (pl.) ask him; verb and pronoun suffix), *manzalū* (his high place; pronoun suffix), *min<sup>c</sup>hilū* (its sieve; pronoun suffix), *milū* (you (pl.) do; verb suffix), *t-halhilū* (you (pl.) celebrate; verb suffix), *tkammilū* (you (pl.) complete it; verb and pronoun suffix), *ilū*



(for him; pronoun suffix). This last rhyme, “*ilū*” (for him) is especially interesting and clever since it echoes Zaghoul’s clincher line in which he played on the two phrases “*ilak*” (for you) and “*ilī*” (for me). Being as it is the key to Mousa’s clincher line, his use of “*ilū*” here gives us good evidence and a good example of how the poets compose their stanzas beginning at the end, and working backwards to construct the preceding lines. They do this rapidly and under the pressure of live performance. This is why key images introduced by their opponents are repeated or reworked in the process of making an argument, and also why poets rely a great deal on the types of rhymes that facilitate the composition process.

Mousa begins his turn by bemoaning his presence there beside Zaghoul, using bird imagery again to plead to “the wings of inspiration” to swoop down and sweep him, “the eagle,” away from the “baby chicks of *zajal*” whom he promised his late, great mentor to forbid from crawling up onto the stage. He admonishes Zaghoul and commands him to bow down before “his king” (i.e. Mousa). He warns Zaghoul that even after “the king dies” he will haunt his every waking moment, and tells him to go ahead and dance and offer wine and sweets to the guests at his funeral. It is at this point in the stanza that Mousa begins to extend the image and deliver his clincher. He tells Zaghoul to go ahead and sing and dance and celebrate, because he is just like “the Jews who ululated at the burial of Christ” only to turn around three days later and “bow down” in worship of his resurrection. With this argument, Mousa has metaphorically equated Zaghoul with Christ’s murderers and himself with the resurrected Christ. While this stanza is very effective and elicits a great deal of applause from the audience, one cannot help but fear the consequence of Mousa’s calling himself not only a king, but now Jesus Christ himself.

### 3.3.6. Sixth Exchange

#### 3.3.6.1. Zaghloul

يبعد عدوك عن صفوف حبايبك

١/ يا ابن مريم قوم قلو لنايبك

35:42 1a) Yā ibin Maryam ‘ūm ‘illū l- nāyibak

Yib<sup>c</sup>ud <sup>c</sup>adūwwak <sup>c</sup>an şufūf [i]ḥbāyibak

1b) O son of Mary, rise and tell your deputy

To move away your enemy from the ranks of your beloved ones

1c) *Son of Mary, rise and tell your deputy*

*To remove your enemy from the ranks of your loved ones*

جايي ترگعنا ومين الجاييك

٢/ يا ز غيب الله يساعدك عا مصاييك

35:54 2a) Ya Zghayb<sup>231</sup> Alla ysā<sup>c</sup>idak <sup>c</sup>ā mšāyibak

Jāyyi trakki<sup>c</sup>nā w mīn il-jāyibak

2b) O Zoghayb, God help you with your misfortunes

You're coming to make us kneel and who brought you

2c) *God help you, Zoghayb, with your misfortunes*

*You came here to make us kneel? Who brought you?*

<sup>231</sup> The combination of the vocative particle يا followed by a noun of the poet's choice is a formulaic substitution device that is extremely useful. Not only does it enable the poet to quickly fit words together and produce chunks of lines, but it also gives the poet a chance to address a vast variety of people and things, allows him to call his opponent by name or to label him with an adjective. It is also an excellent opportunity to extend the voice in a long melisma on the long alif vowel yā.

٣/ شَبِهْتَ حَالَكَ بِالْمَسِيحِ شَوْ صَايَبِكْ

لَنْكَ مَسِيحٌ وَلَا ظَهَرْتَ عَجَائِبِكْ

36:04 3a) Shibbahit ḥālak bil-masīḥ shū ṣāyibak

Lannak masīḥ [i]w lā ṣahart ʿjāyibak

3b) You likened yourself to Christ, what's gotten into you?

You're no Christ nor have you shown your miracles

3c) *You liken yourself to Christ? What's gotten into you?*

*You're no Christ and haven't performed any miracles either*

الدَّجَالُ خَيْكَ وَالْيَهُودُ قَرَائِبِكْ

٤/ وَلَا أَنْتَ مُوسَى، أَنْتَ "مُوشَى" بِفَرْدِ عَيْنِ

36:13 4a) [i]W lā init Mūsā, init “Mūshā” b-fard ʿayn

Id-dijjāl khayyak w-il-yahūd [i]ʿrāyibak

4b) You're not even Mousa, you're Mouha with one eye<sup>232</sup>

The Antichrist is your brother and the Jews are your relatives!

4c) *You're not even Moses, you're the one-eyed Moshe!*

*The Antichrist is your brother and the Jews are your cousins!*

#### Choral Refrain:

36:20

الدَّجَالُ خَيْكَ وَالْيَهُودُ قَرَائِبِكْ (twice)

Id-dijjāl khayyak w-il-yahūd [i]ʿrāyibak (twice)

The Antichrist is your brother and the Jews are your relatives!

*The Antichrist is your brother and the Jews are your cousins!*

<sup>232</sup> The reference is to Moshe Dayan, the Israeli military leader and politician, who wore a patch over one eye. Zaghloul is also playing a game with Mousa's name again here, this time switching the letter “s” to the letter “sh” to change Mousa to Mousha. Note that in Arabic the “s” and “sh” are identical in shape and are only differentiated by the three dots above the letter “sh”. S = ش Sh = س

### 3.3.6.2. Mousa

او جيب ذات المقلع وذات الرخام

١/اوخ... عطيتك رخام وروح يا زغلول نام

36:38 1a) Ōkh...<sup>°</sup>ṭaytak [i]rkhām w rūḥ yā Zaghlūl nām

Aw jīb zāt-il-ma'la<sup>°</sup> [iw]w zāt-ir-rkhām

1b) Owkh...I gave you marble and go O Zaghloul sleep

Or bring the same quarry and the same marble

1c) *Owkh...I gave you marble, Zaghloul, go get some sleep*

*Or bring the same kind of quarry and the same kind of marble*

عم تجرح شعور العروبة بوجه عام

٢/بتستجد بأعور تا تحضى باهتمام

36:50 2a) [i]Btistanjid b-<sup>°</sup>a<sup>°</sup>war tā taḥḍā bihtimām

<sup>°</sup>Am tijraḥ sh<sup>°</sup>ūr-il-<sup>°</sup>urūbi b-wajih <sup>°</sup>ām

2b) You appeal to a one-eyed man to gain attention

You're hurtin the feelings of the Arabs in a general fashion

2c) *You seek help from a one-eyed man to get attention*

*But you're hurting the feelings of all the Arabs across the board*

اسم موسى بلا نقط مثل الدوام

٣/وتا ادم الفكرة بحجة وانسجام

37:02 3a) [i]W tā id<sup>°</sup>am-il-fikrā bi-ḥijjī w-insijām

<sup>°</sup>Isim Mūsā blā nu'aṭ mitl-id-dawām

3b) Let me support the idea with zeal and harmony

The name Mousa has no dots like endurance<sup>233</sup>

3c) *Let me push the notion with zeal and harmony*

*The name Mousa has no dots, just like endurance*

<sup>233</sup> Beginning with this example, *dawām*, Mousa lists a series of words that are spelled using only Arabic letters without dots. His choices are also all very positive images he equates with his name by using the formulaic simile phrase *mitl* ... (like ...) .

37:10 4a) Mitl-is-samā mitl-il-ilāh mitl-is-salām

Mitl-is-sa<sup>c</sup>d mitl-il-wa<sup>c</sup>d mitl-is-s-hām<sup>234</sup>

4b) Like the sky like God like peace

Like good luck like the promise like arrows

4c) *Just like the sky, like God, like peace*

*Like good luck, like a promise, like straight arrows*

تا تنقطو ويصير موشى للملام

٥ / وشو خصك باسمي يا زغلول الحمام

37:23 5a) [i]W shū khaṣṣak [i]b-‘ismī yā Zaghlūl-il-ḥamām

Tā tna’’tū w yṣīr Mūshā lil-malām

5b) And what is my name to you, O zaghloul the pigeon<sup>235</sup>

For you to dot it and have it become Mousha for rebuke

5c) *And what business is it of yours, little Pigeon?*

*Dotting the letters of my name, turning it to Mousha for rebuke*

<sup>234</sup> Ziadeh’s transcription gives *mitl-il-ḥusām* (like the sword) rather than *mitl-is-sihām* (like arrows).

<sup>235</sup> Mousa slings a big insult here by calling Zaghloul “zaghlūl-il-ḥamām” since the literal meaning of *zaghlūl* is a baby chick, usually a dove, and *il-ḥamām* is either the commonplace and nuisance of a bird, the pigeon, or the peaceful dove. Either way, Mousa is calling Zaghloul a diminutive of that, effectively belittling him with his own name. This is his counter to Zaghloul’s attack on Mousa’s name.

وعين موسى البعدها مسك الختام

37:32 6a) Raḥ jīb<sup>236</sup> °aynayk-it-tnayn b-‘inti’ām

6b) I will bring your two eyes with revenge

6c) *I am going to take your two eyes with a vengeance*

تايسير موسى مش تا اكبر بالمقام

37:40 7a) [i]W ḥuṭṭun tlāt nu’ṭāt °āzīni °alām

7c) And put them the three dots a decoration mark

7c) *And put those three dots as decorations*

٦/ رح جيب عينيك التين بانتقام

W °ayn Mūshā l-ba°id-hā misk-il-khitām

And the eye of Moshe which remains “misk-il-khitām”<sup>237</sup>

*And Moshe’s one eye that you brought here in your last line*

٧/ وحطن ثلاث نقاط عازينة علام

Tā yṣīr Mūshā mush tā ikbar bil-ma’ām

So it will become Mousha not to grow larger in stature

*Turning it into Mousha, not to puff myself up*

<sup>236</sup> Ziadeh gives *shīl* (remove) rather than *jīb* (get).

<sup>237</sup> *Misk-il-khitām*, according to *Hans Wehr Arabic-English Dictionary*, literally means “the concluding musk”, stemming originally from the practice of finalizing a letter with perfume (Wehr 909). Figuratively, the expression means “the crowning touch.” In *zajal*, *misk-il-khitām* refers to the concluding line of the stanza, or the “clincher”. In this case, Mousa is making reference to Zaghloul’s previous turn in which he ended by saying, “You’re not Mousa, you’re Moshe with one eye, etc.”

ينقط حروف الناس ويغير كلام

٨/ تا حرم البتضيق عندو القافوي

37:49 8a) Tā ḥarrim il-bit-ḏī' ʿindū-l-ʿāfyi

Yna''it̤ [i]ḥrūf-in-nās<sup>238</sup> w yghayyir kalām

8b) To forbid he who has difficulty with the rhyme

From dotting the letters of people and changing words

8c) *But to forbid that one who has trouble making rhymes*

*From dotting letters of peoples' names and changing their words*

### Choral Refrain:

37:56

ينقط اسامي الناس ويغير كلام (twice)

Y na' 'it̤[i] ḥu rūf-i n-nā s[i] w[i] yghay yi r[i] kalām

From dotting the letters of people and changing words

*From dotting the letters of peoples' names and changing their words*

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<sup>238</sup> Ziadeh gives *asāmī-n-nās* (names of people) rather than *ḥurūf-in-nās* (letters of people).

### 3.3.6.3. Verbal Duel Summary and Explication: Sixth Exchange [35:42 – 38:10]

Zaghloul's brief sixth stanza of *ma'annā* is powerful and to the point. The four lines are punctuated by end rhyme *-bak*. The final *-ak*, which was discussed earlier (Mousa's first stanza), is a pronoun suffix meaning "you" or "your," and is used as such in all of Zaghloul's rhymes: *nāyibak* (your deputy), *ḥbāyibak* (your loved ones), *mṣāyibak* (your misfortunes), *jāyibak* (brought you), *ṣāyibak* (gotten into you), *ʿjāyibak* (your miracles), and *'rāyibak* (your relatives).

Zaghloul wastes no time attacking Mousa's metaphorical equation with the resurrected Christ. He calls out to "Son of Mary" to remove his enemies (i.e. Mousa and his *jawqa*) from the ranks of his lovers (i.e. Zaghloul and his *jawqa*). Then Zaghloul reprimands Mousa directly, asking him what has gotten into him. How dare he call himself Christ? He's not Christ and has never performed a single miracle! And then in his clincher line, Zaghloul completely deconstructs Mousa's previous clincher, in which Mousa equated Zaghloul with the Jews as murderers of Christ. He tells Mousa, "You're no Christ, and you're not even Mousa (i.e. the biblical Moses). You're the one-eyed Mousha (Moshe), the Antichrist is your brother and the Jews are your relatives!" This is a particularly clever move on Zaghloul's part, as it reverberates on many levels. Of primary significance is the play on Mousa's name, making it a very personal kind of attack by Zaghloul. By changing the letter س (*s*) to its sister letter ش (*sh*), which is identical in shape and is distinguished by the addition of three dots above, Zaghloul turns Mousa's Arabic name into its Hebrew counterpart, Mousha or Moshe, thus transferring the association with the Jews back onto Mousa. Moreover, Zaghloul strengthens the allusion to the infamous Israeli military leader Moshe Dayan, who was known for wearing an eye-patch, by calling Mousa "the one-eyed Moshe." But Zaghloul doesn't stop there. He makes one more



association, this time to *al-Dajjāl*, or *al-Masīḥ al-Dajjāl*, the False Christ or Antichrist, who is depicted in Islamic eschatology as being one-eyed. Some descriptions say his right eye is punctured and his left eye is raised to his forehead like a star. Thus, in effect, in this short four-lined stanza and with the simple addition of three dots to the letter “s”, Zaghloul turns Mousa into Moshe Dayan, brother of the Antichrist and cousin of the Jews. It is clear that the duel has taken a turn down a rocky road, now that such heated personal, political, and religious-themed insults have started to be slung back and forth.

Mousa’s response is an eight-line stanza incorporating the rhyme – *ām*. This time, the rhyme is not a grammatical suffix. The rhyme words are a variety of mostly nouns and adjectives and one imperative verb in the opening hemistich: *nām* (go to sleep). In terms of word play, Mousa incorporates a very interesting strategy as he counters Zaghloul’s changing his name to Mousha. He affirms that his name is not Mousha, but Mousa, with no dots, like a list of items he offers all of which are spelled with “dotless” letters: الدوام *ad-dawām* (endurance), السما *is-samā* (the sky), السلام *is-salām* (peace), السعد *is-sa<sup>c</sup>d* (good luck), الوعد *il-wa<sup>c</sup>d* (promise), السهام *is-s-hām* (arrows). This is a crafty strategy, and is particularly effective because his choice of words spelled without dots, which are like his name and thus items with which he can be personally associated, are all very positive images and concepts. Mousa then proceeds to rebuke Zaghloul, this time calling him “a pigeon,” telling him he has no business putting dots on his name and invoking the name Moshe. He tells Zaghloul it’s not worth hurting everyone’s (all the Arabs’) feelings just to get attention. As Mousa transitions to the final lines of his stanza, he combines the “one-eyed” image with the three dots image and threatens Zaghloul. He tells Zaghloul he will take the one eye from Zaghloul’s last line and add to it Zaghloul’s two eyes, which Mousa will pluck out with vengeance, and then he will place them himself over the letter “s” and turn

his own name from Mousa to Mousha. And this he will do, not to puff himself up, but to stop those who have “difficulty making rhymes” (i.e. Zaghoul) from messing around with people’s names and changing their words. Once again we see the strategy of taking the opponent’s metaphors and turning them upside down. Mousa has turned Zaghoul’s three dots into an opportunity to figuratively pluck Zaghoul’s eyes out.

### 3.3.7. Seventh Exchange

#### 3.3.7.1. Zaghoul

ريشك من الأرز وشلوح السنديان

١/ يا جوانح الزغول ضلك في أمان

38:11 1a) Ya jwāniḥ-iz-zaghlūl ḍallik fī amān

Rīshik min-il-arz [i]w-shilūḥ-is-sinidyān

1b) O wings of the Zaghoul, remain in safety

Your feathers are from the cedars and the branches of the oaks<sup>239</sup>

1c) *Have no fear, wings of the baby dove*

*Your feathers are made of cedar and oak*

ما عرفت من رقة قصيدي الصخر لان

٢/ عا بيت مري شو جيت تعمل يا فلان

38:25 2a) ʿā Bet Mirī shū jīt tiʿmil yā falān

Ma ʿrifīt min riʾit ʿaṣīdī-ṣ-ṣakhir lān

2b) At Beit Miry what'd you come to do, nameless one<sup>240</sup>?

Don't you know from the fineness of my qasid rocks get pliant?

2c) *Why did you come to Beit Meri, Mr. What's-his-name?*

*Don't you know my odes are so amazing even the rocks go soft?*

<sup>239</sup> These, once again, are quintessential symbols for Lebanon.

<sup>240</sup> Zaghoul calls Mousa “yā falān” meaning “O nameless one” or “So-and-so.” It is very funny and derisive considering the duel has been centering on Mousa's name.

بغَيّر وما بخلّي عا هالبيدر زوان

٣/ وبالقفية والوزن وحروف البيان

38:35 3a) [i]W bil-‘āfiyi w-il-wazin w[i] ḥrūf-il-bayān

[i]Bghayyir [i]w ma b-khallī ‘ā ha-l-baydar [i]zwān

3b) And with rhymes and meter and the letters of rhetoric

I make changes and don’t leave on this threshing floor any chaff

3c) *And as for rhyme, meter, and eloquent words*

*I change them how I like with no chaff left on my threshing floor*

وعبي الفاضي بعينك وفضي الملاّن

٤/ ورح ضل حط وشيل فيك بهالزمان

38:46 4a)<sup>241</sup> [i]W raḥ ḍall ḥuṭṭ w shīl fīk [i]b-ha-z-zamān

W ‘abbi-l-fāḍī b-‘aynak w faḍḍī-l-malān

4b) I’ll keep putting in and taking from you in this time

And fill the empty space in your eye and empty the full space<sup>242</sup>

4c) *I’ll keep on pushing and pulling you while we’re here*

*Right in your face I’ll fill the empty and empty the full*

وبيجوز راسك اوضعو بتاني مكان

٥/ بيجوز قلبك ازرعو محل اللسان

38:55 5a) Biyjūz ‘albak izra‘ū mḥall-il-lsān

W biyjūz rāsak ūḍa‘ū b-tānī makān

5b) It’s possible your heart I’ll plant in the tongue’s place

And it’s possible your head I’ll put in another place

5c) *Maybe I’ll plant your heart where your tongue should be*

*And maybe I’ll put your head in some other place*

<sup>241</sup> This line was left out of Ziadeh’s transcript.

<sup>242</sup> Zaghoul is playing with opposites here – fill the empty and empty the full.

وبتلات نقط دمك منهي المهرجان

٦/ وبضغط عليك وبعصر ك بالكشتبان

39:06 6a) [i]W biḡhaṭ ʿlayk [i]w biʿiṣrak bil-kishitbān

[i]W b-tlāt nuʾaṭ dammak mninhī-l-mahrajān

6b) And I will press on you and squeeze you into the thimble

And with three drops of your blood we will end the festival

6c) *I'll compress you and squeeze you into a thimble*

*And with three drops of your blood we'll end the festival*

ونقطة بقلب جهنم الحمرا كمان

٧/ ومن هالنقط رح نحط نقطة باليابان

39:15 7a) W min ha-n-nuʾaṭ raḥ [i]nhuṭṭ nuʾṭā bil-Yabān

[i]W nuʾṭā b-ʿalb [i]jhannam il-ḥamrā kamān

7b) And from these drops we will put one drop in Japan

And one drop in the heart of red hell, too

7c) *We'll take one of those drops and put it in Japan*

*And another drop we'll put in the heart of red hell*

حتى يقولوا هون موشى زغيب كان

٨/ وما يضل منك غير نقطة ببيت مري

39:25 8a) [i]W ma yḡall minnak ghayr nuʾṭā b-Bet Mirī

Ḥattā yʾūlū hawn Mūshā Zghayb kān

8b) And there won't remain of you but one drop in Beit Mery

In order for them to say that here Mousha Zoghayb was<sup>243</sup>

8c) *Then there'll only be one drop of you left in Beit Mery*

*To mark the spot where Moshe Zoghayb used to be*

<sup>243</sup> This is a very famous line in which Zaghloul cleverly returns to the game of playing on Mousa versus Mousha. Here, the three dots on the letter “*shīn*” have been turned into three drops of Mousa’s blood. Zaghloul tosses the first two out and leaves one in Beit Mery as a trace, a reminder that “Mousha” was here.

### Choral Refrain:

39:32

حتى يقولوا هون موشى ز غيب كان (twice)

Ḥat tā y[i] 'ū lū haw n[i] Mū shā Z[i] ghay b[i] kān

In order for them to say that here Mousha Zoghayb was

*To mark the spot where Moshe Zoghayb used to be*

### 3.3.7.2. Mousa

ما تحمل من الزغيب آلام وبلا

أوخ... ز غلول ضب جناحك وارحل بلا

39:48 1a) Ōkh..Zaghlūl ḍibb [i]jnāḥak w irḥal balā<sup>244</sup>

Ma tiḥmul min [i]Zghayb ālām w balā

1b) Owkh..Zaghloul, pack up your wings and leave don't<sup>245</sup>

Bear from Zoghayb pains and misfortunes

1c) *Owkh. Pack up your wings and take off, Zaghloul, rather than suffering Zoghayb's slings and arrows*

<sup>244</sup> Mousa is using an unusual rhyme here. Many of the words ending in “*lā*” that he incorporates do not normally come at the end of a clause, giving rise to a number of examples of enjambment (lines 1, 2, 7). Also, by itself, the rhyme cluster is the word “No.” In effect, Mousa subliminally cries “No” to Zaghloul line after line.

<sup>245</sup> Here is one of the instances of enjambment across the hemistichs: *balā*//*Ma tiḥmul* (Don't bear...)

	ما تحمل بهالليل آلام وبلا	١/ زغلول ضب جناحك وارحل بلا
39:59	1a') <sup>246</sup> Zaghlūl ḍibb [i]jnāḥak w irḥal balā	Ma tiḥmul b-hal-layl ālām w balā
	1b') Zaghloul, pack up your wings and leave don't	bear in this night <sup>247</sup> pains and misfortune
	1c') <i>Pack up your wings and take off, Zaghloul, rather</i>	<i>than suffering this night's slings and arrows</i>
	تصرخ عابطش ز غيب لا حول ولا	٢/ واصرخ يا محلا البيت والرجعة ولا
40:07	2a) [i]W iṣrukh ya maḥlā-l-bayt wi-r-raǰ'a wa lā	Tiṣrukh ʿā baṭsh [i]Zghayb lā ḥawla wa lā
	2b) And shout “how better is home and to return” and don't	shout <sup>248</sup> at the tyranny of Zoghayb “there is no power except” <sup>249</sup>
	2c) Say, “Home is where I should be” rather than	Cry from Zoghayb's tyranny, “There is no power except...”

<sup>246</sup> Here Mousa repeats his first line, with changes as noted in next footnote.

<sup>247</sup> Upon repetition of line 1, there are two changes: first hemistich leaves out “*Ōkh*” and second hemistich substitutes *b-hal-layl* (this night) for *min [i]Zghayb* (from Zoghayb).

<sup>248</sup> Here is the second example of enjambment across the hemistichs: *wa lā*// *Tiṣrukh* (and don't // shout).

<sup>249</sup> Mousa says *lā ḥawla wa lā* (There is no power except) which is an abbreviated version of the idiom *lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā bil-lāh* (There is no power and no might save with God). This expression is used when one feels defeated and powerless at the hands of some force.

مش وقت لعب كشاتيينك و "الجال"

٣/ بتعصر بطل بالكشتبان وهم انطلى

40:16 3a) [i]Bti<sup>c</sup>sur baṭal bil-kishitbān wahm inṭalā<sup>250</sup>

Mish wa'it la<sup>c</sup>b [i]kshātbīnak wi-l-“galā”

3b) You squeeze a hero into a thimble is a deceptive illusion

It's not time for playing with thimbles<sup>251</sup> and “abracadabra”

3c) *Squeezing a hero into a thimble is a deceptive fantasy*

*This is no time for playing with thimbles and “abracadabra”*

ما ما بيحرج القديس مطلوب الصلا

٤/ المنبر اذا بيريد دمي يا هلا

40:26 4a) Il-manbar izā biyrīd dammī<sup>252</sup> yā halā

Ma biyihruj il-‘iddīs maṭlūb<sup>253</sup> iṣ-ṣalā

4b) The stage if it wants my blood, it's welcome

The saint doesn't get flustered by the demand of prayer

4c) *If this stage wants my blood, it is welcome to it*

*A saint doesn't get flustered by the demands of prayer*

<sup>250</sup> In Ziadeh's transcription he gives *Irḥal wa lā* (Go or else) in place of *wahm inṭalā* (a deceptive illusion).

<sup>251</sup> The expression “la<sup>c</sup>b [i]kshātbīnak,” literally, “playing with your thimbles” is also an idiom meaning to play tricks on people. Mousa uses this cleverly to repeat Zaghoul's image of the thimble from the previous stanza and turn his own words against him.

<sup>252</sup> Ziadeh gives “izā biyihtāj daffī” (if it needs my tambourine) instead of “izā biyrīd dammī” (if it wants my blood).

<sup>253</sup> Ziadeh gives “in-nāsik bi” (the **monk** doesn't get flustered **by** the demand of prayer) instead of “il-‘iddīs” (the demand of prayer doesn't fluster the **saint**).



40:34 5a) W rasmak [i]twazza<sup>c</sup> a-l-bashar min w ilā

Ṭābi<sup>c</sup> amīrī l-bukhul bi-snīn-il-ghalā

5b) And your picture was spread on humankind from and to

An official stamp<sup>254</sup> stinginess in the years of high prices<sup>255</sup>

5c) *Your picture was dispersed on humankind back and forth*

*An official stamp like stinginess in expensive times*

40:42 6a) W law lā tlāt nu'tāt min dammī salā

Ramz id-dinī w-id-dīn<sup>256</sup> bi-nfūs-il-malā

6b) And if three drops of my blood have flowed

The symbol of the world and religion in the souls of the world

6c) *And if three drops of my blood have spilled*

*They are the symbol of world and religion in people's hearts*

<sup>254</sup> The phrase “Ṭābi<sup>c</sup> amīrī” means “an official stamp” and is usually for small denomination. The gist of it is that Zaghloul's picture is equivalent to a cheap stamp.

<sup>255</sup> This line, while continuing to sling insults at Zaghloul, doesn't follow logically from the general argument introduced in the first few lines. Mousa does get back to the argument in the next line.

<sup>256</sup> Ziadeh gives “hawdī shī<sup>c</sup>ār id-dīn” (These are religion's motto) instead of “Ramz id-dinī w-id-dīn” (The symbol of the world and religion).

البيرق لحتى تحمر وشق الفلا

٧/ الاولى دم البطل طرطش على

40:50 7a) Il-awwalī damm-il-baṭal ṭarṭash ‘alā

L-bayra’ la-ḥattā t-ḥammarr w sha’’-il-falā

7b) The first is the blood of the hero splattered upon

the flag<sup>257</sup> until it reddened and split the skies

7c) *The first drop is that of the hero splattered upon*

*the flag, turning it red and rending the skies*

والتالثة دم الحسين بكر بلا

٨/ والتانية دم المسيح على الصليب

40:58 8a) W-it-tānyi damm-il-masīḥ ‘la-ṣ-ṣalīb

Wi-t-tālti damm-il-Ḥusayn [i]b-Karbalā

8b) And the second is the blood of Christ upon the cross

And the third is the blood of al-Husayn in Karbala<sup>258</sup>

8c) *The second is the blood of Christ on the cross*

*And the third is the blood of al-Husayn in Karbala*

<sup>257</sup> Here is a third instance of enjambment across the hemistichs: ‘alā// L-bayra’ (upon//the flag).

<sup>258</sup> Mousa has taken the image of the three dots Zaghloul added to his name to change it from Mousa to Mousha to a new level in this stanza. He foreshadows the religious symbols in Line 2 with his abbreviated “There is no power or might save in God” and brilliantly ends his stanza with the three dots representing three drops of blood – one from the martyred national hero holding the flag, one from the Christian savior and martyr Jesus Christ, and one from al-Husayn, the Muslim saint and grandson of the prophet Muhammad martyred at the Battle of Karbala.

**Choral Refrain:**

41:08

والتالته دم الحسين بكربلا (twice)

Wi-t- tāl [i] ti dam m-il-[i] Ḥu say n [i] b-[i] Ka r ba lā

And the third is the blood of al-Husayn in Karbala

*And the third is the blood of al-Husayn in Karbala*

### 3.3.7.3. Verbal Duel Summary and Explication: Seventh Exchange [38:11 – 41:23]

Zaghloul's seventh stanza of *ma'annā* is eight lines in length and is based on the end rhyme *-ān*. This particular ending is not a grammatical suffix, and although it would have been an opportunity to incorporate *Libnān* (Lebanon) into his stanza, this is not one of the varieties of nouns, adjectives, and verbs Zaghloul used as rhymes.

In his seventh turn here, Zaghloul is masterful in his manipulation of all the elements that go into creating a great verbal duel stanza. In his first line he appeals to “the wings of Zaghloul” which are made of “cedar and oak,” two quintessential symbols for Lebanon, thus identifying himself with his and his audience's beloved homeland. In his second line, he insults Mousa by addressing him as *Yā falān* (*O falān*), a word akin to the English “John Doe” used as a generic name for an otherwise nameless person, a nobody. It is especially insulting here considering how much attention both poets have been giving to Mousa's actual name. The second half of line 2 is dedicated to boasting, which spills over into line 3. Zaghloul describes his odes as being so wondrous they cause the “rocks to soften” and describes himself as a master of rhyme and meter who changes words at will and without leaving “any chaff on the threshing floor.” In line 4 Zaghloul insists that despite Mousa's attempts to control him he will go on “pushing and pulling” him, “filling the empty” and “emptying the full.” In the fifth line Zaghloul continues listing all the changes he will make to Mousa, focusing now on his body parts. He tells Mousa he will put his heart where his tongue is and his head “in that other place,” for which he draws a lot of laughter and applause from the audience. In line 6 Zaghloul tells Mousa he will “squeeze him into a thimble” and end the festival with the three drops of Mousa's blood that filter through the sieve. Here we see further development of the image of the three dots introduced earlier, originally used by Zaghloul to turn Mousa into Mousha, then by Mousa as three eyes (two

plucked from Zaghoul), and now by Zaghoul as three drops of Mousa's blood. This is the point at which Zaghoul begins the final lead-in to his clincher line. In line 7 he describes what he plans to do with each of the drops of Mousa's blood. First, he says he will put one drop "in Japan." The second drop will go to "the heart of red hell." And the third will be left in Beit Mery, a tiny trace of him so people will know that "Mousha Zoghayb," as Zaghoul wittily refers to him again, "was here." These last two lines with the final hemistich ending emphatically on the simple past tense verb "was," are some of Zaghoul's most memorable lines, establishing him as a brilliantly imaginative and crushing opponent.

Mousa's response is also an eight-line stanza of *ma'annā*. He employs a very interesting rhyme sequence in this stanza based on the end rhyme *-lā*. Many of the words ending in "*lā*" that he incorporates do not normally come at the end of a clause, giving rise to an uncharacteristic number of examples of enjambment. In line 1, for example, Mousa ends the first hemistich with the word *balā*, spilling into the first word of the second hemistich to complete the clause *balā ma tiḥmul* (don't bear/put up with/suffer). Mousa also ends the second hemistich of line 1 with the same word, *balā*, but this time with another meaning – misfortunes. Mousa gets even more mileage out of his wordplay when he repeats his first line (as we have seen Zaghoul do twice before), resulting in the repetition of *balā* four times. In line 2 we find another example of enjambment across the end of the first hemistich as Mousa ends with *lā*, a word in its own right, which is part of the clause completed by the first word in the second hemistich to form *lā tiṣrukh* (don't shout/cry). And as he did in line 1, Mousa uses the exact same rhyme word for both hemistichs of line 2, creating a play on the phrase *wa lā*. In both cases, *wa lā* (literally "and no") is an incomplete phrase. In the case of the first usage at the end of the first hemistich, the meaning is completed in the second hemistich. In the case of the second usage, however, the

meaning is completed by the imagination of the listeners who, with their shared cultural-linguistic knowledge, recognize the second *wa lā* (which is part of the larger phrase *lā ḥawla wa lā* ) as the beginning of the phrase *lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā bil-lāh* (There is no power and no might save with God). This familiar expression is normally said when one feels defeated and powerless at the hands of some force. Later, in line 7, we find yet another example of enjambment when Mousa ends the first hemistich with the preposition *‘alā* (on) and begins the second hemistich with its noun complement *l-bayra* '(the flag), completing the prepositional phrase “on the flag”. Also adding to the cleverness of Mousa’s chosen end rhyme is the fact that in itself *lā* means “No.” In effect, then, Mousa subliminally cries “No” to Zaghoul throughout this stanza, line after line, a total of fifteen times.

Mousa’s rhymes support his goal of admonishing Zaghoul and negating his arguments. He begins by telling Zaghoul to pack it up and go back home since he would be much safer there, away from Mousa’s arrows. He tells Zaghoul he would be better off pining over the benefits of staying home than screaming for God’s help from Mousa’s tyranny. He mocks Zaghoul’s notions of squeezing him into a thimble, calling such talk “a deceptive fantasy” and “abracadabra.” At this point in Mousa’s argument, line 3 of his stanza, he succeeds at incorporating yet more word play when he uses the expression “*la‘b [i]kshātbīnak*,” literally, “playing with (your) thimbles,” which is also an idiomatic expression meaning to play tricks on people. Mousa uses this cleverly to repeat Zaghoul’s image of the thimble from the previous stanza and turn his own words against him. Next, Mousa brings up the matter of the three drops of blood and adds one more layer to this growing image. He begins by welcoming the idea of having his blood spilled, since the three drops of his blood will symbolize “the world and religion” to everyone. In particular, he continues, the drops will represent first, “the blood of the

hero splattered on the flag,” second, “the blood of Christ on the cross,” and third, “the blood of al-Husayn in Karbala.” These are clearly three striking images, all great examples of martyrdom, with which Mousa wishes to connect himself via his poetry.

Mousa has taken the original image of the three dots Zaghoul added to his name back at the beginning of the sixth exchange to a new level in this stanza. He foreshadows the religious symbols in Line 2 with his abbreviated “There is no power or might save in God” and brilliantly ends his stanza with the three dots representing three drops of blood – one from the martyred national hero holding the flag, one from the Christian savior and martyr Jesus Christ, and one from al-Husayn, the Muslim saint and grandson of the prophet Muhammad martyred at the Battle of Karbala.

### 3.3.8. Eighth Exchange

#### 3.3.8.1. Zaghloul

بايدي علقت عن جد مش عن ولدني

١/ يا واقع بنقطة النقط مش هيني

41:24 1a) Yā wā'ī<sup>c</sup> b-nu'tā in-nu'aṭ mish hayyīnī

B-‘īdī ‘li’it ‘an jadd mish ‘an waldanī

1b) O he who has fallen into a drop<sup>259</sup>, drops are not easy

In my hands you’re caught in seriousness not childishness

1c) *You fell into my trap, those drops are a serious matter*

*Into my hands you’ve fallen, it’s not a joke*

عن دمك الاسود كرامتها بغني

٢/ الراية البدمات الشهيد ملوني

41:37 2a) Ir-rāyi-l-bi-dammāt ish-shahīd [i]mlawwanī

‘An dammak il-aswad karāmit-hā b-ghinī

2b) The flag which with the blood of the martyr is colored

About your black blood its honor can do without

2c) *That flag which is dyed with the martyr’s blood*

*Its honor has no use for your black blood*

<sup>259</sup> The expression *wā’ī<sup>c</sup> b-nu’tā* has the literal meaning “fallen into a drop” but as an idiomatic expression it means to suffer from a blood clot and suffer a seizure or stroke or aneurism. Zaghloul is also saying, “You who has fallen into my trap,” the trap being the game of the three dots starting from changing Mousa’s name to Mousha.



رقبة الشمر قبالة مجدو بتحنني

٣/ ودم الحسين بكر بلا الدم الغني

41:47 3a) [i]W dam-il-Husayn [i]b-Karbalā id-damm-il-ghanī

Ra'bit-ish-shumr [i]'bāl majdū b-tinḥinī

3b) And the blood of Husayn in Karbala the precious blood

The neck of the great people before his glory bends

3c) *And that precious blood of Husayn in Karbala*

*The necks of great men bend down before its glory*

منو لموسى الخيرى وفعلو الدني

٤/ ودم الفدى شعب الجرس والميدني

41:57 4a) [i]W dam-il-fadā sha<sup>c</sup>b-il-jaras w-il-maydanī

Mannū li Mūsā-l-khaybarī w fi<sup>c</sup>lu-d-danī

4b) The blood of him who redeemed the people of the bell and minarets<sup>260</sup>

It is not for Mousa the Khaybari<sup>261</sup> and his lowly action

4c) *And the blood of the redeemer of the people of the bells and the minarets*

*Wasn't shed for Mousa of Khaybar and his lowly actions*

<sup>260</sup> “The people of the bells” refers to Christians and “the people of the minarets” refers to Muslims.

<sup>261</sup> Khaybar was the largest Jewish settlement during the time of the Prophet Muhammad and was the site of frequent battles with the new religion. Zaghoul is calling Mousa a “Khaybari,” in other words, a Jew from Khaybar, someone who was looked down upon for opposing the Prophet’s new religion.

وَدُّوك عَاتِيْنَة وَعَامْرَسَة مَصُوْبِي

٥/ وتلات نقط دمك بساعة محزني

42:07 5a) W[i] tlāt nu’aṭ dammak bi-sā’a miḥzinī

Waddūk ‘ā tīni w ‘ā marsī mṣawbanī

5b) And three drops of your blood in a sad hour

Led you to a fig tree and a noose<sup>262</sup>

5c) *It was three drops of your blood which in a sad hour*

*Led you to a fig tree and a noose*

انطرشوا عا كفك كل نقطة في دني

٦/ هودي المصاري اللي قبضتن عالمسيح

42:17 6a) Hawdī-l-maṣārī illī ‘abaḍt-un ‘ā-l-masīḥ

Nṭarshū ‘ā kaffak kill nu’ṭā fī dinī

6b) These are the money that you were paid for Christ

They splattered onto your palm each drop in a world

6c) *Those drops were the blood money you were paid for Christ*

*They fell onto your palm and splattered in every direction*

### Choral Refrain:

42:25

انطرشوا عا كفك كل نقطة في دني (twice)

[i]N ṭar shū ‘ā kaf fa k[i] kil l[i] nu’ ṭā fī dī nī

They splattered onto your palm each drop in a world

*They fell onto your palm and splattered in every direction*

<sup>262</sup> The term used for “noose”, *marsī mṣawbanī*, literally means “a soapy rope” or a rope treated with oil soap to strengthen it. Zaghloul is alluding to Judas hanging himself from a fig tree, i.e. calling Mousa a Judas.

### 3.3.8.2. Mousa

	تحول وصايا جداد اقراهن مليح	١/أوخ...قبل المصاري الدم عا كفي الجريح
42:44	1a) Ōkh..‘Abl-il-maṣārī id-damm °ā kaffī-l-jarīḥ	[i]T-ḥawwal waṣāyā jdād iqrā-hun mlīḥ
	1b) Owkh..Before the money the blood on my wounded hand	Transformed into new commandments read them carefully
	1c) <i>Owkh...Before the money, the blood on my wounded hand</i>	<i>Transformed into new commandments; read them carefully!</i>
	يرفع زجل لبنان لمقام الفصح	٢/ اول وصية لازم الجوق الصحيح
42:54	2a) Awwal waṣiyyi lāzim-ij-jawq’-iṣ-ṣaḥīḥ	Yirfa° zajal Lubnān li m’ām-il-faṣīḥ
	2b) The first commandment the correct jawqa should	Raise the <i>zajal</i> of Lebanon to the level of the eloquent/fusha
	2c) <i>The first commandment: Let the true jawqa</i>	<i>Raise zajal to the level of eloquence</i>
	بهالدير يمرق تحت سكين الديبح	٣/ والتانية كل ديك ما بيعرف يصيح
43:03	3a) W-it-tānyī kull dīk ma b-ya°rif yiṣīḥ	[i]B-had-dayr yimru’ taḥit sikkīn-id-dbīḥ
	3b) And the second any rooster that doesn’t know how to crow	In this monastery passes under the knife of butchery
	3c) <i>And the second: Any rooster that doesn’t know how to crow</i>	<i>In this monastery, must submit to the butcher’s knife</i>

٤/ والثالثة اصحا الوقوف بوجه ريح

W-ir-rāb<sup>c</sup>ā in khālīfīt-hā ma btisitrīh

And the fourth if you break it you won't ever rest

*And the fourth, if you break it, you'll never rest*

٥/ والخامسة والسادسة تحاشى القبيح

W-is-sāb<sup>c</sup>ā w-ith-thāmnī<sup>c</sup> īn-il-kasīh

And the seventh and the eighth help the lame

*And the seventh and eighth: Help the crippled*

٦/ والتاسعة كم الافاعي من الفحيح

W-il-<sup>c</sup>āshrā lā tghurr nafsak bil-madīh

And the tenth don't deceive yourself with praise

*And the tenth: Don't deceive yourself with excess praise*

٧/ وهيك موسى كان بالماضي صريح

Waddā-l-waṣāyā tighmur-il-kawn-il-fasīh

He let the commandments inundate the spacious universe

*And let the commandments flood the universe*

والرابعة انخالفتها ما بتستريح

43:11 4a) W-it-tāltī iṣ-ḥā-l-wi'ūf b-wajih rīh

4b) And the third be wary of standing in the face of a wind

*4c) The third: Don't stand in the face of a strong wind*

والسابعة والتامنة عين الكسيح

43:19 5a) W-il-khāmsī w-is-sādsī t-ḥāshā-l-qabīh

5b) And the fifth and the sixth stay away from the ugly

*5c) The fifth and the sixth: Keep away from ugliness*

والعاشرة لا تغر نفسك بالمديح

43:27 6a) W-it-tās<sup>c</sup>ā kimm-il-afā<sup>c</sup>ī mn-il-faḥīh

6b) And the ninth muzzle the vipers from hissing

*6c) The ninth: Muzzle the vipers and stop their hissing*

ودا الوصايا تغمر الكون الفسيح

43:34 7a) W hayk Mūsā kān bil-māḍī ṣarīh

7b) In this way Moses was in the past frank

*7c) This was Moses' way in the past, to be blunt*

٨ / قبل الشرايع والرسل والانبياء

وقبلك وقبل التاجروا بدم المسيح

43:41 8a) ‘Abl-ish-sharāyi<sup>c</sup> w-ir-risul w-il-anbiyā

W ‘ablak w ‘abl-il-tājarū b-damm-il-masīḥ

8b) Before religious laws and the messengers and the prophets

And before you and those who profited from Christ’s blood

8c) *Long before religious laws and messengers and prophets*

*And long before you and those who sold out Christ’s blood*

**Choral Refrain:**

43:48

وقبلك وقبل التاجروا بدم المسيح (twice)

W[i] ‘ab[i] la k[i] w[i] ‘ab[i]l- il- tā ja rū b-dam m-il- ma sīḥ

And before you and before those who did business with the blood of Christ

*And long before you and those who sold out Christ’s blood*

### 3.3.8.3. Verbal Duel Summary and Explication: Eighth Exchange [41:24 – 44:03]

Zaghloul's eighth turn is a six-line stanza of *ma<sup>c</sup>annā*. His lines are based on end rhyme *-nī*, which, as mentioned before, is a multipurpose grammatical suffix. This time around, six of his eleven rhymes are words ending in the feminine suffix: *hayyinī* (easy), *waldanī* (childishness), *mlawwanī* (colored), *maydanī* (minaret), *miḥzinī* (saddening), *mṣawbanī* (soaped; soapy). The others are nouns, adjectives, and verbs that happen to end in *-nī*. As Zaghloul proceeds through his lines, constructing his argument and creating yet another transformation for the three dots image, he indulges in a lot of clever and witty word play. His opening hemistich is the first example, which he begins with a play on the literal meaning of the word *nu'ṭā* (drop) nestled inside the idiomatic expression: *wā'ī<sup>c</sup> b-nu'ṭā* (literally, one who has fallen into a drop). As an idiomatic expression the phrase means to suffer from a blood clot and suffer a seizure or stroke or aneurism. The phrasing is also reminiscent of Zaghloul's earlier stanza during the third exchange when he played on the notion of Mousa "falling into the trap." When he starts this new stanza with "O you who has fallen into a drop," Zaghloul implies, "You who has fallen into my trap," the trap being the game of the three dots Zaghloul started when he changed Mousa's name to Mousha. Zaghloul goes on to warn Mousa "drops are not easy!"

Zaghloul also employs interesting wordplay in line 4 when he describes Christians and Muslims using the metonyms *il-jaras* (the bell) and *il-maydanī* (the minaret). In the second hemistich of the same line, Zaghloul plays a new game with Mousa's name, calling him Mousa the Khaybari. The allusion is to Khaybar, the largest Jewish settlement during the time of the Prophet Muhammad and the site of the Battle of Khaybar. Zaghloul calls Mousa a "Khaybari," in other words, a Jew from Khaybar, someone who was looked down upon for opposing the Prophet's new religion.

In terms of Zaghoul's argument and strategy in this stanza, his goal was to undermine the three positive images Mousa introduced in his seventh stanza and transform them one by one into negative ones. He begins with the image of "the blood of the hero splattered on the flag," and negates it saying that honorable flag has no use for Mousa's *black* blood. This is one of many instances during the duel when Zaghoul attacks Mousa personally by referring to his dark skin color in derogatory terms. Next, Zaghoul tackles Mousa's image of the precious blood of al-Husayn in Karbala. This time he argues that the blood of that great martyr, to which great people bow their heads in humility, was meant for redeeming "the people of the bell and the minaret," (i.e. the Christians and the Muslims) but that blood was not spilled for the likes of Mousa al-Khaybari (i.e. an anti-Islam rebel) and his lowly actions. The final image, that of the blood of Christ the savior, is transformed by Zaghoul into the pieces of silver (three drops of blood...thirty pieces of silver) taken by Judas as payment for Christ's blood. In his final lines, Zaghoul makes Mousa out to be the Judas, and the drops of blood are the pieces of silver spilling onto his hand.

Mousa responds to Zaghoul with an eight-line stanza of *ma<sup>c</sup>annā* based on the end rhyme *-īḥ*. This rhyme is not any sort of grammatical suffix, but is most likely recognized from the outset to have been chosen as the final clincher rhyme *il-masīḥ* (the Messiah; i.e. Christ). Although the rhymes this time cannot be classified according to grammatical suffixes, as we have observed in many cases, many of Mousa's rhymes, including the clincher rhyme *il-masīḥ*, share the very common morphological pattern *fa<sup>c</sup>īl*: *jarīḥ* (wounded), *mlīḥ* (carefully), *ṣaḥīḥ* (correct), *faṣīḥ* (eloquent), *dbīḥ* (butchery), *qabīḥ* (ugly), *kasīḥ* (lame), *faḥīḥ* (hissing), *madīḥ* (praise), *ṣarīḥ* (frank), *fasīḥ* (spacious).

Mousa's argument in this stanza revolves around deflecting Zaghoul's accusation of being like Judas and accepting blood money for Christ and recasting himself as being akin to the biblical Moses. He begins by describing his own palms as "wounded" and tells Zaghoul that he has received ten new commandments for him to follow. This is a variation on the listing strategy we have seen Mousa (and Zaghoul) use very effectively before. Mousa's new set of commandments, all of which apply to the current contest and the world of *zajal* poetry in general, are as follows: First commandment – Let the true *jawqa* (presumably Mousa's) raise *zajal* to the highest levels of eloquence; Second commandment – Roosters who can't crow (Zaghoul and his *jawqa*?) should submit to the butcher's knife; Third commandment – Don't stand in a strong wind (i.e. Mousa's powerful poetry?); Fourth commandment – This one should not be broken (though Mousa does not really say what it is) and if you break it, you will never rest; Fifth and Sixth commandments – Stay away from ugliness (Zaghoul and his poetry?); Seventh and Eighth – Help the crippled (does Mousa mean to be magnanimous here, condescending to help handicapped Zaghoul?); Ninth commandment – Muzzle the vipers (Zaghoul and his crew?) and stop their hissing; Tenth commandment – Don't deceive yourself with excessive praise (warning to Zaghoul not to boast so much?).

Mousa closes his stanza by cementing his alignment with and resemblance to the biblical Moses ("this was Moses' way in the past, to be blunt and flood the universe with his commandments") before turning the tables on Zaghoul and implying that it was Zaghoul and his cohorts (and *not* Mousa) who "sold out Christ's blood."



### 3.3.9. Ninth Exchange

#### 3.3.9.1. Zaghloul

وعاخبار موسى وشعب موسى تغضبي

١/أوف...أوف...حقك يا نجومات السما تتكهربي

44:04 1a) Ōf... Ōf...Ḥa''ik yā nijmāt-is-samā titkahrabī

W ʿā khbār Mūsā w shaʿib Mūsā tighḍabī

1b) Owf.Owf.It's your right, O stars of the sky<sup>263</sup>, to get upset

And on the news of Mousa and the people of Mousa get angry

1c)Owf..O stars of the sky, you have every right to be upset

Hearing all this nonsense of Mousa and the people of Mousa

بحاكك هون وعم ترد ببو ضبي

٢/ شو باك مش فاهم شو قصدي ومطلبي

44:23 2a) Shū bāk mish fāhim shū ʿaṣdī w maṭlabī

Bḥākīk hawn [i]w ʿam [i]tridd bbū ḡabī

2b) What's with you not knowing what I mean and want

I address you here and you're answering in Abu Dhabi

2c)What's wrong with you? Why don't you catch my drift?

I talk to you here and you answer in Abu Dhabi

معرم مثل شي ديك فوق المصطبي

٣/ هلق كنت عامل زعيم المرتبي

44:34 3a) Halla' kinit ʿāmil zaʿīm-il-martabī

Mʿarram mitil shī dīk faw' -il-maṣṭabī

3b) Now you were acting like the commander of the trade

Puffed up like some rooster on a high fence

3c) Just now you were acting like the master of the trade

All puffed up like some rooster crowing on the rooftop

<sup>263</sup> Remember that Zaghloul opened the duel by mentioning the stars.

	روح شوف بختك مع منجم مغربي	٤/ شو خصني بدفك وكفك يا غبي
44:44	4a) Shū khaṣnī b-daffak w kaffak yā ghabī <sup>264</sup>	Rūḥ shūf bakhtak ma <sup>c</sup> [i]mnajjim mughrabī
	4b) What've I to do with your tambourine and palm <sup>265</sup> , idiot	Go see your luck with a gypsy fortune teller
	4c) <i>What do I care about your tambourine and palm, you idiot?</i>	<i>Go see your future with a gypsy fortune teller</i>
	اثبتاك على شي اسم حاجي شقلبي	٥/ شبعنا تهرب يا عديم الموهبي
44:53	5a) [i]Shbi <sup>c</sup> nā taharrub yā <sup>c</sup> adīm-il-mawhabī	Isbit-lak <sup>c</sup> alā shī isim ḥājī sha'labī
	5b) We've had enough of your fleeing, you devoid of talent one	Settle yourself on some name enough somersaulting
	5c) <i>We've had enough of your fleeing, talentless one</i>	<i>Settle on one name, enough doing cartwheels</i>
	وعيسى المسيح العا حضن امر ربي	٦/ بعلمي عملت حالك ابن بنت النبي
45:03	6a) [i]B- <sup>c</sup> ilmī <sup>c</sup> milit ḥālak ibin bint-in-nabī	W <sup>c</sup> īsā-l-masīḥ il- <sup>c</sup> ā ḥuḍun immū ribī
	6b) To my knowledge you made yourself the Prophet's grandson	And Jesus Christ who in his mother's lap was raised
	6c) <i>So far I've heard you claim to be the Prophet's grandson</i>	<i>And Jesus Christ, raised in his mother's warm embrace</i>

<sup>264</sup> This entire line was left out of Ziadeh's manuscript.

<sup>265</sup> Note here that the image of the "palm" has been volleyed back and forth several times by both poets. In this instance, Zaghloul uses it (*kaffak*) in a rhyming phrase with (*daffak*), drawing attention to it.

- ٧/ ولما شعرت صارت حياتك متعبي  
 بلشت تستجد بموسى الاجنبي
- 45:11 7a) [i]W lammā sh<sup>c</sup>irit šārit ḥayātak mit<sup>c</sup>ibī      Ballashit tistanjid bi Mūsā-l-ajnabī  
 7b) And when you felt your life became tiresome      You started appealing to Mousa the foreigner  
 7c) *And when you felt your life was on the line      You made an appeal to Mousa the foreigner*
- ٨/ فادي النصارى والرسول اليعربي  
 اتركهن لاصحاب العمائم والعبي
- 45:19 8a) Fādī-n-Naṣāra w-ir-rasūl-il-ya<sup>c</sup>rubī      Itrik-hun li-aṣ-ḥāb-il-<sup>c</sup>amāyim w-il-<sup>c</sup>ibī  
 8b) The savior of the Nazarenes and the Messenger of the Arabs      Leave them to the owners of the turbans and the abayas  
 8c) *The savior from Nazareth and Messenger of the Arabs      Leave those guys to the wearers of turbans and robes*
- ٩/ وجيب العصاية عند موسى صاحبك  
 تا اليوم كسرّها عا راسك يا صبي
- 45:28 9a) [i]W jīb-il-<sup>c</sup>aṣāyi-l-<sup>c</sup>inid Mūsā ṣāḥbak      Ta-l-yawm kassir-hā <sup>c</sup>ā rāsak yā ṣabī  
 9b) And get the staff belonging to Moses your friend      So today I can break it over your head, little boy<sup>266</sup>  
 9c) *And get me your buddy Moses's staff      So I can break it over your head right here and now, little boy*

<sup>266</sup> In this stanza Zaghloul delivers some of his most vicious and memorable lines. He resorts to name-calling twice: once in line 4 when he says, “You idiot” and in the final hemistich when he says, “Little boy.” Like his description of the stars in the opening line, Zaghloul is “electrified” with anger and lashes out at Mousa from beginning to end.

### Choral Refrain:

45:35

تا اليوم كسّر ها عا راسك يا صبي (twice)

Ta-l- ya w[i] m[i] kas si r[i] -hā °ā rā sa k[i] yā ṣa bī

So today I can break it over your head, little boy

*So I can break it over your head right here and now, little boy*

### 3.3.9.2. Mousa

باب الزغيبي باب جعفر برمكي

١/آخ..يا جايعين..يا جايعين تجمّعوا بهالمملكي

45:51 1a) Ākh.Yā jāy°īn.Yā jāy°īn [i]tjamma°ū b-ha-l-mamlakī

Bāb-iz-zghaybī bāb Ja°far Barmakī

1b) Owkh..Oh hungry ones (twice) gather at this kingdom

The gate of the Zoghaybi; the gate of Jafar Barmakī<sup>267</sup>

1c) Owkh..Come to my kingdom, hungry ones

*Through the gate of Zoghayb, the gate of Jafar Barmakī*

ذكر العصا عيب وسخافة ومضحكي

٢/ وجو الادب والشعر غير المعركي

46:02 2a) [i]W jaww-il-adab w-ish-shi°r ghayr-il-ma°rakī

Zikr-il-°aṣā °ayb w sakhāfī w maḍhakī

2b) And the atmosphere of literature and poetry not battles

Mentioning the staff is shameful and dim-witted and laughable

2c) *Into the world of literature and poetry, not the battlefield*

*Mentioning the staff is shameful, dim-witted, and laughable!*

<sup>267</sup> The reference is to the famous Barmakid family. Jafar Barmakī inherited the position of vizier to the Arab Abbasid Caliph Harun al-Rashid. Jafar Barmakī appears along with the Caliph Harun al-Rashid in many stories of *The Thousand and One Nights*. He was famous for his eloquence, love of pleasure and parties, and for his generosity (Encyclopaedia Britannica Online).

- مش بالعصا البدو عليها يتكي / ٣ الانسان مجدو في كلامو الما شكي
- 46:11 3a) Il-insān majdū fī kalāmū -l-mā shikī<sup>268</sup> Mush b-il-<sup>ʿ</sup>aṣā l-baddū <sup>ʿ</sup>alay-hā yittikī  
 3b) A man's glory is in his words that don't draw complaints Not in the staff which he needs upon it to lean  
 3c) *Man's glory is in his well-chosen words Not in the staff he needs to lean on*
- وانجيل عيسى والوصايا مشاركي / ٤ وأعلى الحكي قرآن أحمد لو حكي
- 46:20 4a) [i]W aghlā-l-ḥakī Qur'ān Aḥmad law ḥikī W injīl <sup>ʿ</sup>īsā w-il-waṣāyā mshārakī  
 4b) The most expensive talk is Ahmad's Quran<sup>269</sup> if it spoke And Jesus's gospel and the commandments in collaboration  
 4c) *The richest talk is the Quran of Muhammad had it spoken And the gospel of Jesus combined with the commandments*
- ما قبلتها والشرع لو منها بكي / ٥ عطيتك وصايا مقدسة ومباركي
- 46:28 5a) I'ṭaytak waṣāyā m'addasī w[i] mbārakī Mā 'ibilt-hā w-ish-shari<sup>ʿ</sup> law min-hā bikī  
 5b) I gave you commandments holy and blessed You didn't accept them and religious law even if for that it cried  
 5c) *I gave you commandments that were holy and blessed You didn't accept them and gave no regard to religious law*

<sup>268</sup> Ziadeh's transcription gives "*majdū bil-ḥakī il-mā byishtikī*," (his glory is in talk that doesn't complain).

<sup>269</sup> Mousa uses the name Ahmad rather than Muhammad for the meter. Both names stem from the same root (*ḥamada*) and are used interchangeably as names for the Prophet.

٦/ يا لجنة التحكيم ابكي واضحكي

رح موت من انسان متحدي الذكي

46:37 6a) Yā lijnit-it-taḥkīm ‘ibkī w-iḏḥakī

Raḥ mūt min insān mit-ḥaddī-z-zakī

6b) O panel of judging cry and laugh

I’m going to die from a person who dares the smart one

6c) *Dear judges, cry and laugh*

*This one who dares challenge the intelligent one is killing me*

ولا بالعصارح يفهم ولا بالحكي

٧/ رد الوصايا وصار يسأل عالصا

46:45 7a) Radd-il-waṣāyā w ṣār yis’al ‘a-l-‘aṣā

W lā bil-‘aṣā raḥ yifham [i]w lā bil-ḥakī

7b) He refused the commandments and began asking for the staff

Neither by the staff will he understand nor by talking

7c) *He rejected the commandments and asked for the staff*

*He’ll never understand, by talking or by the staff!*

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### Choral Refrain:

ولا بالعصارح يفهم ولا بالحكي (twice)

46:52

W lā bi l-‘a ṣā raḥ yif ham [i]w lā bil-ḥa kī (twice)

Neither by the staff will he understand nor by talking

*He’ll never understand, by talking or by the staff!*

### 3.3.9.3. Verbal Duel Summary and Explication: Ninth Exchange [44:04 – 46:53]

Zaghloul's ninth *ma<sup>c</sup>annā* stanza consists of nine lines with end rhyme *–bī*. As mentioned previously, the *ī* suffix has several grammatical uses. A large number of Zaghloul's rhymes in this stanza can be classified into grammatical suffix categories as follows: second person verb suffix – *titkahrabī* (you get upset), *tighḍabī* (you get angry); pronoun suffix - *maṭlabī* (my request); feminine suffix - *il-martabī* (the trade), *il-maṣṭabī* (high fence), *il-mawhabī* (talent), *sha'labī* (somersaulting), *mit<sup>c</sup>ibī* (tiresome); nisba (relative adjective) suffix – *mughrabī* (gypsy), *ajrabī* (foreign), *ya<sup>c</sup>rubī* (Arab). A couple of Zaghloul's rhymes, which are not included in this list, are noteworthy for their effectiveness as word choices. First, in line 2, the rhyme on Abu Dhabi at the end of the second hemistich punctuates a very witty remark. Zaghloul complains about Mousa's attempts to change the subject and divert the audience's attention. He says, "What's wrong with you? Don't you understand what I am saying? I'm talking to you right here, why are you answering me from Abu Dhabi?" The audience reacts to this with laughter and applause as Zaghloul emphasizes his insult with especially beautiful intonation [44:23]. And a little later on, in line 4, Zaghloul's rhyme at the end of the first hemistich is a blatant insult when he calls Mousa, "*Yā ghabī*," (literally, O stupid one). This resonates with the final clincher rhyme when Zaghloul ends his turn by calling Mousa "*Yā ṣabī*," (literally, O little boy). Note that these two phrases, *Yā ghabī* and *Yā ṣabī* are metrically identical, examples of formulaic substitutes.

As Zaghloul works his way through the successive lines of his stanza, he follows a formulaic pattern we have seen already in his and Mousa's previous stanzas. He begins with an appeal to the stars, which we will remember is how he opened his first stanza of the duel. He addresses the stars directly, empathizing with them for having to put up with Mousa and all his

nonsense. In the second line, he addresses Mousa directly, making the witty insult about Mousa evading the issue and answering from “Abu Dhabi.” He begins a new angle of attack in line 3, which is to pursue the notion that Mousa “doesn’t get it,” despite portraying himself not long ago as “master of the trade” and puffing himself up “like a rooster on the rooftop.” Note the reappearance of the rooster image, which was part of Mousa’s Second Commandment (Roosters who can’t crow should submit to the butcher’s knife). Once again we see how the poets turn their opponents’ own words against them. Zaghoul continues with this strategy in his fourth line in which we see the palm image turned upside down. In the first hemistich, Zaghoul uses word play to belittle Mousa’s palm with the catchy phrase, “*daffak w kaffak*” (your tambourine and your palm). In this hemistich, when Zaghoul says, “What have I got to do with your tambourine and your palm, you idiot?” not only does he get mileage out of the catchy sound of *daffak w kaffak*, but he is adding another layer of insult with the specific word “tambourine” as a metonym for *zajal* poetry, owing to the integral role the tambourine plays in the poet’s delivery of a line with tambourine raised. In effect, then, Zaghoul is saying, “What’ve I got to do with your palm and your stupid poetry!” Then in the second hemistich he ridicules Mousa even more, telling him to go see a “gypsy fortune teller,” who can presumably read Mousa’s palm for him. In the fifth line, Zaghoul continues ridiculing Mousa, calling him “talentless one,” and accusing him of “flip-flopping.” This sets off a list beginning in line 6 of all the different names and faces Mousa has tried on over the course of the duel: the Prophet’s grandson, Jesus Christ, Mousa the foreigner, the Savior of the Nazarenes, and the Messenger of the Arabs. Zaghoul incorporates metonymy once again, telling Mousa to “leave that to the owners of turbans (headdress) and robes” (i.e religious men). With his list complete and the momentum reaching its peak, Zaghoul delivers the clincher line with a return to the image of Moses and his staff, which he introduced



in his fourth stanza, and tells Mousa to “Go get your buddy Moses’ staff so I can whack you over the head with it, Little Boy!”

Mousa responds with a seven-line stanza of *ma<sup>c</sup>annā* using the end rhyme *–kī*. Although the consonant before the final *ī* is “k” and not “b” this end rhyme is very close to Zaghoul’s rhyme. Mousa’s rhymes can also be categorized according to grammatical suffixes as follows: feminine suffix – *mamlakī* (kingdom), *il-ma<sup>c</sup>arakī* (the battle), *maḍḥakī* (laughable), *mshāarakī* (shared), *mbāarakī* (blessed); nisba suffix (relative adjective) – *Barmakī* (family name meaning Barmakid), *zakī* (smart); second person verb suffix - *iḍḥakī* (laugh). Many of the rhymes also can be classified as having the characteristic final *ī* of a special class of Arabic verbs known as “weak” verbs: *mā shikī* (did not complain), *yittikī* (leans on), *ḥikī* (he spoke) and its cognate *ḥakī* (speech), and *bikī* (he cried).

Following the formulaic protocol, Mousa begins his stanza with a plea to “the hungry ones,” inviting them to his “kingdom.” He ushers them in through the “Gate of Zoghayb (Mousa’s family name)” which, according to his poetic line, is synonymous with the “Gate of Jafar Barmaki,” thus creating a metaphor equating his family (the Zoghaybi) with the famous Barmaki family. Jafar Barmaki was vizier to the Arab Abbasid Caliph Harun al-Rashid and the name Jafar Barmaki appears along with the Caliph Harun al-Rashid in many stories from *The Thousand and One Nights*. He was famous for his eloquence, love of pleasure and parties, and for his generosity. In the second line, Mousa turns his attention to attacking Zaghoul. He does this by contrasting his kingdom, “the world of literature and poetry,” with Zaghoul’s insistence on “the battlefield,” and his “shameful, dimwitted, and laughable” mention of the staff. In his third line, Mousa insists that a man’s strength comes not from the violence of hitting someone with a staff, but from his words. Concentrating on the staff image, Mousa admonishes Zaghoul

in a somewhat subtle manner as he points out what a man really needs a staff for is “to lean on” in his old age. In his fourth line, Mousa develops the idea of the value of words further, pointing to specific examples which are again of a religious nature – the Holy Quran and the Gospel of Jesus plus the Ten Commandments. This leads to Mousa’s fifth line in which he mentions the ten new commandments he offered earlier (eighth exchange). He reprimands Zaghloul for not accepting those holy and blessed commandments and for turning a blind eye to “religious law.” In line 6, Mousa makes a new plea, to the judging panel this time, telling them to go ahead and “Cry and laugh!” and complaining to them about this “one who dares challenge the smart one (i.e. Mousa himself)”. Note how Mousa’s end rhyme here is the word *zakī* (smart one), the antonym of Zaghloul’s *ghabī* (stupid). In effect, and without saying it directly, Mousa inverts Zaghloul’s accusation that he is “stupid” by calling himself “smart.” Mousa takes this one step further in his seventh and final line, by implying that Zaghloul is the “stupid” one, since no matter how much he talks to Zaghloul or even how hard he hits him with the staff, nothing can make him understand!

### 3.3.10. Tenth Exchange

#### 3.3.10.1. Zaghloul

وشوف الرزق والخير عم يدري دري

١/ يا لجنة الحكم اهتدي عا بيدري

46:54 1a) Yā lijnit-il-ḥikm ihtidī ʿā baydarī

W shūf-ir-rizi' w-il-khayr<sup>270</sup> ʿam yidrī darī

1b) Oh panel of judging be led to my threshing floor

And see the boon and the bounty all over the place

1c) *Come this way to my threshing floor, Judges*

*See all the boon and bounty pouring forth*

أو شي حدا كتير الكلام وثرثري

٢/ لو كون عم بحكي شي واحد همشري

47:05 2a) Law kūn ʿam biḥkī shī wāḥad hamsharī

Aw shī ḥadā ktīr-il-kalām w sarsarī

2b) If I were speaking to some vagabond<sup>271</sup>

Or someone plentiful of words and chatter

2c) *If I were talking to some vagabond*

*Or some garrulous chatterbox*

<sup>270</sup> Ziadeh's transcript gives "shūf-il- 'mniḥ w-il-khayr" (see the wheat and the bounty) rather than "shūf-ir-rizi' w-il-khayr" (see the boon and the bounty).

<sup>271</sup> Here in Line 2 Zaghloul begins a seven-hemstich hypotheses to a conditional statement in which he lists one image after another of incompetent competitors he would have an easier time understanding than Mousa. It is a particularly effective use of the listing strategy that allows Zaghloul to sling a witty and colorful crescendo of insults at his opponent before releasing the energy in the final lines of his stanza. His delivery is strong and melismatic and the *riddādi* and audience are clearly enthralled by it.

٣/ أو أخوت وفاقد صوابو الجوهرى

Aw shī ṣanam wā'if bi-mat-ḥaf sangarī

Or some idol standing in the museum of a tinsmith

*Or some statue on display in a tinsmith's museum*

٤/ أو أطرش وشو صار حولو ما درى

Aw akhras w mā byilḥum [i]lsānū bghirī

Or a mute his tongue doesn't get fixed with glue

*Or a mute whose tongue can't even be fixed with glue*

أو شي صنم واقف بمتحف سنكرى

47:15 3a) Aw akhwat w fā'id ṣawābū-l-jawharī

3b) Or a lunatic who has lost his essential balance

*3c) Or some madman who's lost his marbles*

أو أخرس وما بيلحم لسانو بغرى

47:23 4a) Aw aṭrash w shū ṣār ḥawlū mā dirī

4b) Or a deaf man what happened around him he didn't know

*4c) Or some deaf man with no idea what's happening around him*

أكثر ما عم بفهم عليك ببيت مري

47:30 5a) Kint [i]fhimit min ha-l-ghashīm-il-barbarī

5b) I would have understood from the barbaric fool

*5c) I'd understand from such a barbaric fool*

٥/ كنت فهمت من هالعشيم البربرى

Aktar mā °am bifham °layk [i]b-Bayt Mirī

More than I'm understanding you in Beit Mery

*Much more than I'm getting from you in Beit Mery*

- ولا يريد اسمك ينكتب في دفترى      ٦/ حكيك ما بيفهم حدا ولا تـو طري
- 47:41 6a) Ḥakyak mā biyfahhim ḥadā [i]w lannū ʔarī<sup>272</sup>      W lā brīd ismak yinkatab fī daftarī  
 6b) Your talk doesn't make anyone understand nor is it fresh      And I don't want your name written in my record book  
 6c) *Your words make no sense to anyone, nor are they fresh*      *I don't want your name written in my record book*
- لما لقيتك عالـشعر عم تفتري      ٧/ وبين الوصايا والعصا وبيع وشري
- 47:52 7a) [i]W bayn-il-waṣāyā w-il-ʿaṣā [i]w bayʿ w shirī      Lammā la'aytak ʿash-shiʿr ʿam tiftirī  
 7b) Between the commandments and staff and selling and buying<sup>273</sup>      When I found you on poetry fabricating lies<sup>274</sup>  
 7c) *Between the commandments and staff and the buying and selling*      *When I found you turning poetry into lies*
- واكتب بايدى وصيتك عا منبرى      ٨/ تركت الوصايا وجيت افتح عنبرى
- 48:03 8a) Trakt-il-waṣāyā w jīt iftaḥ ʿanbarī      W iktub bi-ʿīdī wṣīyyitak ʿā manbarī  
 8b) I left the commandments and came to open my storehouse      And write in my hand your will and testament on my stage  
 8c) *I left the commandments and opened my storehouse of knowledge*      *And handwrote your will and testament here on my stage*

<sup>272</sup> Ziadeh's transcript gives “w lā shaʿrak ʔarī” (and your poetry isn't tender) rather than “w lannū ʔarī” (and it (your talk) isn't tender either).

<sup>273</sup> I suspect Zaghloul throws in this phrase (selling and buying) to fill the line more than for added meaning. It is a cliché that here could mean arguing back and forth.

<sup>274</sup> Note here that the poetic sentence continues into the next line.

٩/ ومن هون مش رح روح تا خلي العصا

تلعب على جنباك تا جلدك يهتري

48:11 9a) [i]W min hawn mish raḥ rūḥ tā khallī-l-ʿaṣā

Tilʿab ʿalā jnābak tā jildak yihtirī

9b) And from here I will not leave until I make the staff

Play on your sides until your skin is torn to pieces

9c) *I will not leave this place until I make this staff*

*Play upon your sides and tear your skin to pieces*

### Choral Refrain:

تلعب على جنباك تا جلدك يهتري (twice)

48:20

Til ʿa b[i] ʿa lā j[i] nā ba k[i] tā jil da k[i] yih ti rī (twice)

Play on your sides until your skin is torn to pieces

*Play upon your sides and tear your skin to pieces*

### 3.3.10.3. Verbal Duel Summary and Explication: Tenth Exchange [46:54 – 48:39]

Zaghloul now delivers the final stanza of *ma<sup>c</sup>annā*. Mousa's response will be the first of the closing *qaṣīds*, of which each poet will deliver two stanzas. Since Mousa opened the party, delivering the first of the *Iftitāḥiyyi qaṣīds*, Zaghloul should have the last word and deliver the final closing *qaṣīd*. Whether it was planned as such or not, Zaghloul ends up having one extra turn in the *ma<sup>c</sup>annā* form.

This, Zaghloul's tenth *ma<sup>c</sup>annā* stanza, is nine lines in length and also features a rhyme ending in the grammatical suffix *ī*, the end rhyme *-rī*. Many of Zaghloul's rhymes can once again be categorized accordingly: pronoun suffix – *baydarī* (my threshing floor), *daftarī* (my notebook), *anbarī* (my storehouse of knowledge), *manbarī* (my stage); nisba suffix – *hamsharī* (vagabond), *jawharī* (essential), *sangarī* (tinsmith), *barbarī* (barbaric), *sarsarī* (chatter); words stemming from “weak” verbs - *yidrī darī* (all over the place), *mā dirī* (he didn't know), *ghirī* (glue), *ṭarī* (fresh, tender), *shirī* (buying), and *tiftirī* (fabricating lies).

We also find in this stanza a number of examples of Zaghloul's tendency to use pairs of cognates or homonyms. For example, at the end of line 1, the idiomatic expression *yidrī darī*, meaning “all over the place,” or “in abundance,” consists of the verb *yidrī* (literally “it knows”) and its gerund *darī* (literally “knowing”), forming a cognate accusative construction used for emphasis. Later on, in line 4, the phrase *mā dirī* (he didn't know) contains *dirī*, which also stems from the same verb stem. In line 5, the first hemistich contains the verb *fhimīt* (I understood) and the second hemistich contains *bifham* (I understand). This same verb appears once more in the first hemistich of line 6: *mā biyfahhim* (doesn't make one understand). In line 7 we find an example of a catchy phrase containing a pair of opposites - *bay<sup>c</sup> w shirī* (selling and buying), in

this case perhaps more valuable to Zaghoul for its musicality than for helping to strengthen the impact of his argument.

As we have come to expect, Zaghoul's first line makes an address to the judging panel, ushering them to his "threshing floors" where they can enjoy the "boon and the bounty." In line 2 he turns his attention to attacking Mousa, making use of the listing strategy again. Here in Line 2 Zaghoul begins a seven-hemistich hypotheses to a conditional statement in which he lists one image after another of incompetent competitors he would have an easier time understanding than Mousa. This is a particularly effective use of the listing strategy as it allows Zaghoul to sling a witty and colorful crescendo of insults at his opponent before releasing the energy in the final lines of his stanza. His delivery is strong and melismatic and the *riddādi* and audience are clearly enthralled by it. In particular, Zaghoul builds a crescendo of images framed by the conditional clause, "If only I were talking to a..." in which he includes "some vagabond," "some garrulous chatter box," "some madman whose lost his marbles," "some statue in a tinsmith's museum," "some deaf man who doesn't know what's going on around him," "a mute whose tongue can't be fixed with glue," or "some barbaric fool," all of whom Zaghoul could understand better than what he is getting from Mousa "in Beit Mery." With the rhyme ending on the place name where the *zajal* battle is taking place, the conclusion of the crescendo and of Zaghoul's line is easily anticipated by the audience and leads to a loud and enthusiastic applause.

While line 5 with its ending on "in Beit Mery" might have made an excellent clincher line, Zaghoul's argument (and stanza) does not end there. In the remaining four lines, Zaghoul runs with the notion that Mousa doesn't make sense and tells him with disdain, "I don't want your name written in my record book." He takes on Mousa's rebuke for his not accepting the



commandments by citing them as examples of Mousa “turning poetry into lies.” Zaghloul gives this as his reason for “leaving the commandments” and resorting to his own “storehouse of knowledge.” Zaghloul ends his turn with an image of a sort of holy writ of his own – Mousa’s last will and testament and an oath to keep whipping Mousa with the staff “until his skin is shred to pieces.”

### 3.4. Verbal Duel between Zaghloul al-Damour and Mousa Zoghayb: Closing *Qaṣīds*

#### 3.4.1. First Closing *Qaṣīd* of Mousa Zoghayb

		لهيك مجال يهبط مستوايي	١/ أوخ...أوخ...جنائي بعد بوروكز جنائي
48:40	1a)	Ōkh..Ōkh..janāyi ba <sup>c</sup> d Bū Rūkuz janāyī	Li hayk [i]mjāl yihbuṭ mustawāyī
	1b)	Owf...a crime after Abu Rukuz a crime	For in such a circumstance my level falls
	1c)	<i>Owf..What a crime, after the great Rukuz, what a crime</i>	<i>For me to have to stoop so low now</i>
		كون برفقة الزغلول جايي	٢/ وكلما يبسألوا الشعار عني
48:54	2a)	[i]W kill mā b-yis'alū [i]sh-shi <sup>cc</sup> ār <sup>275</sup> c <sup>c</sup> annī	Kūn brif <sup>o</sup> it-iZ-Zaghlūl jāyī
	2b)	And whenever the poets ask about me	I would be in the company of Zaghloul coming
	2c)	<i>And every time the poets ask about me</i>	<i>To be found in the company of Zaghloul</i>
		زرعها النصر رايي حد رايي	٣/ سبعتشر سني وحصون فنّي
49:05	3a)	Sab <sup>c</sup> at <sup>c</sup> ashar sini w[i] ḥṣūn fannī	Zara <sup>c</sup> -hā-n-naṣr rāyī ḥadd rāyī
	3b)	Seventeen years and the fortresses of my art	Victory planted them flag beside a flag
	3c)	<i>Seventeen years, the fortresses of my art</i>	<i>Victory planted them flag beside flag</i>

<sup>275</sup> Ziadeh's transcript gives نَقَاد (*nu''ād*) (critics) instead of شَعَار (*shi<sup>cc</sup>ār*)(poets).

٤/ أنا مرآة بتفضح كل أني

وفضحت عيوبكن عا هالمراي

49:16 4a) Ana [i]mrāyī<sup>276</sup> btifḍaḥ kill ‘innī

W faḍaḥt [i]‘yūbkun ‘a ha-l-[i]mrāyī

4b) I am a mirror it exposes every flaw

And I exposed your faults upon this mirror

4c) *I am a mirror that exposes every flaw*

*Your faults, too, on this mirror I have exposed*

٥/ ولما الشعر ع الشعر انتمّني

حلفت بموطني بربي بسماي

49:27 5a)<sup>277</sup> [i]W lamma-sh-shi‘r ‘a-sh-shi‘r i’tamannī

[i]Ḥlift [i]b-mawṭini [i]b-rabbī bi-samāyī

5b) And when the poetry on the poetry trusted me

I swore on my homeland my God my heaven

5c) *And when poetry entrusted me with poetry*

*I swore on my homeland, my God, and my heaven*

٦/ ما بخلف بين ماروني وسني

ولا بخرب بيت غير لأجل غاي

49:36 6a) Ma bikhluf bayn Mārūnī w Sinnī

W lā bikhrub bayt ghayr il-ajil ghāyī

6b) I don’t differentiate between a Maronite and a Sunni

And I don’t destroy a house except for a purpose

6c) *I don’t discriminate between Maronites and Sunnis*

*And I don’t destroy a man’s house for no reason*

<sup>276</sup> Note Mousa’s clever use of “mrāyī” (mirror) which contains within it “rāyī” (flag) from the previous line. Also in this hemistich, Mousa uses “btifḍaḥ” (it exposes) in the first hemistich and its cognate “faḍaḥt” (I exposed) in the second hemistich.

<sup>277</sup> This line (line 5) and the next (line 6) were left out of Ziadeh’s transcription.

انفضح أمرك تحت مجهر ذكايي

49:46 7a) [i]W yā Zaghlūl jāyī timtiḥinnī

7b) And, Zaghloul, you come to test me

7c) *Zaghloul, you come here to test me*

سقيع الكوخ بخيال البنايي

49:57 8a) Zharit bārid msa'ʿa ḥadd minnī

8b) You appeared cold, frozen, next to me

8c) *You looked cold and frozen beside me*

وطعمتك بتفاح العنابي

50:07 9a) Jibtak zayzafūnī tā tjannī

9b) I got you as a fruitless tree to bear fruit

9c) *I got you as a fruitless tree to make you bear fruit*

٧/ ويا ز غلول جايي تمتحنّي

Infaḍaḥ amrak taḥit mijhar zakāyī

Your matter was exposed under the microscope of my intellect

*But your sorry state was exposed under the lens of my intellect*

٨/ ظهرت بارد مسقع حد مّني

Sa'ṭ<sup>c</sup>-l-kūkh bi-khyāl-il-bināyī

The cold of the hut in the shade of the building

*Like a shack, shivering in the shadow of a building*

٩/ جبّتك زيزفوني تا تجنّي

W ṭa<sup>cc</sup>amtak bi-tiffāḥ-il-<sup>c</sup>ināyī

And I grafted onto you the apples of my concern/care

*And grafted onto you the apple of my heartfelt care*

لأنو المحل فيك من البدايي

١٠ / بقي زهرك حما والتمر كئي

50:16 10a) Bi'ī zahrak ḥamā wi-t-tamir kinnī

Li-‘annū-l-miḥil fīk[i] mn-il-bidāyī

10b) Your flower was a mother-in-law and the fruit a daughter-in-law<sup>278</sup>

Because the barrenness is in you from the start

10c) *But your flower was a mother-in-law and your fruit a daughter-in-law*

*Because barrenness was in you from the start*

وطلقتك من سجن مظلم كفائي

١١ / رجعت شرعتك باب التمني

50:23 11a) W[i]rjī'it sharra'it lak bāb-it-tamannī

W ṭla'tak min sijin muḏlim [i]kfāyī

11b) I returned and opened wide for you the gate of hope

And I freed you from a prison oppressive enough

11c) *I came back and flung open the gate of hope for you*

*And I freed you from a most oppressive jail*

وقبلما تكفر بنعمة عطائي

١٢ / وعطيتك بكر شعري بدون مني

50:32 12a) [i]W 'aṭaytak bikir shi'rī bdūn minnī

W 'abil-mā tikfur [i]b-na'mit 'aṭāyī

12b) And I gave you the first-born of my poetry without a favor/kindness

And before you cursed the blessedness of my gift

12c) *I gave you the first-born of my poetry without a thing in return*

*And before you cursed my bountiful gift*

<sup>278</sup> It is proverbial that mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law are always at odds with each other.

	و عطيتك شرشف اللفة عباي	١٣ / حصنتك ابن لكن بالتبني
50:41	13a) Ḥaḍantak ibin lākin bi-t-tabannī	W ʿṭaytak <sup>279</sup> sharshif-il-lahfī ʿabāyī
	13b) I embraced you a son but by adoption	And I gave you the bedsheet of longing as a robe
	13c) <i>I embraced you as my adopted son</i>	<i>And wrapped you in the blanket of my longing</i>
	وتبدل هالعصا بريشة ودواي	١٤ / قلت بلقي بتطلع حسب ظني
50:48	14a) ‘Ilit balkī b-tiṭlaʿ ḥasib ṣannī	W tibdul ha-l-ʿaṣā b-rīshi w dawāyī
	14b) I said maybe you would turn out as I thought	And trade that staff for a quill and an inkwell
	14c) <i>I said maybe you will turn out as I hoped</i>	<i>And trade that staff for a quill and inkwell</i>
	بعصاي من البداية للنهاي	١٥ / يا عيب الشوم باقي بفرد رني
50:56	15a) Ya ʿayb-ish-shūm bāʾī b-fard rannī	[i]B-ʿaṣāyī mn-il-bidāyī li-n-nihāyī
	15b) Oh what shame you stay on one ringing/tune	With a staff from the beginning to the end
	15c) <i>But oh what shame! You’re stuck on that same tune</i>	<i>That staff in your hand from beginning to end</i>

<sup>279</sup> Note the way Mousa has structured this qaṣīd around the many loving and wonderful things he has done for Zaghloul, only to have Zaghloul throw away his gifts with ingratitude. Mousa uses parallel verbs of the form “I did *this*” to frame his argument: I brought you.../ I fed you.../ I untied for you.../ I freed you/ I embraced you.../ I gave you.... He also uses this structure to introduce some nice poetic imagery: the gate of hope/ first-born of my poetry/bedsheet of longing as a robe, etc.

51:06 16a) [i]Mlūk-ish-shiʿr ḥaddak ʿam [i]tghannī

W[i] mlūk-in-naʿd ʿiddām ʿaynak

16b) The kings of poetry beside you are singing

And the kings of criticism are in front of your eye

16c) *You have the kings of poetry singing beside you*

*And the kings of criticism staring you in the eye*

١٧ / وكيف لك عين تحكي بالعصايي

17a) W kif lak ʿayn tiḥkī b-il-ʿaṣāyī

17b) And how do you have an eye<sup>280</sup> to talk of the staff

17c) *What gall you have to keep mentioning that staff!*

<sup>280</sup> The expression here, *kīf lak ʿayn* (how do you have an eye), is an idiom similar to the English “to have the nerve to”. It is especially effective here due to the repetition of the word “eye” which appeared in the previous hemistich “in front of your eye”.

### 3.4.1.1. Summary and Explication: First Closing *Qaṣīd* - Mousa [48:40 – 51:19]

Mousa's first closing *qaṣīd* consists of seventeen lines, with <sup>c</sup>*ajz* rhymes –*āyī* and *ṣadr* rhymes –*nnī*. As noted many times previously, the final –*ī*, which is present at the end of both of Mousa's first *qaṣīd* rhymes, is a multipurpose grammatical suffix. As it would be cumbersome to list them individually here, a simple count by category will be sufficient and is as follows:

Type of suffix	Number of instances
Pronoun suffix (me, my)	9
Feminine suffix	15
Nisba suffix	1
Weak verb or stems from weak verb	5

Line-by-line summary and explication:

In lines 1 and 2, Mousa laments his present predicament (which he calls “a crime”) – to find himself in the lowly company of Zaghoul after once being in the company of the great, dear, beloved mentor and master poet Khalil Rukuz.

In lines 3 through 6, Mousa boastfully describes himself and his history as a *zajal* poet in glowing terms full of beautiful and compelling poetic imagery – effectively proving his point with his current singing as an example. He describes his “seventeen years” in the trade and the “fortresses of his art” that have been decorated all around with “victory flags.” He describes himself as a “mirror” that exposes flaws, including the flaws of his current opponent. He boasts of having been “entrusted by poetry with poetry,” and having taken an oath upon “his homeland,



his God, and his heaven,” not to discriminate “between Maronites and Sunnis,” and not to “destroy a man’s house for no reason.”

In lines 7 and 8, Mousa attacks Zaghoul. “How dare you come here to test me,” he says bitterly, “when your sorry state was exposed long ago under the microscope of my intellect.” He describes Zaghoul as “cold and frozen” next to Mousa, like a shack shivering in the shadow of a grand building.

In lines 9 through 14, Mousa draws up a list of all the wonderful and generous things he has done for Zaghoul only to have Zaghoul throw away his gifts with ingratitude. Mousa uses parallel verbs of the form “I did *this*” to frame his argument: I brought you.../ I fed you.../ I untied for you.../ I freed you/ I embraced you.../ I gave you.... This structure enables him to introduce several novel poetic images: I opened wide for you “the gate of hope”; I gave you “the first-born of my poetry”; I wrapped you in “the blanket of longing as a robe”. Mousa’s examples of Zaghoul’s ingratitude are also clever, especially in line 10 when he describes the result of his having grafted onto Zaghoul who was “a fruitless tree,” the “apple tree of (Mousa’s) heartfelt care.” According to Mousa, the flower that produced was “a mother-in-law” and the fruit “a daughter-in-law.” In Arab culture, these two are notorious for being forever at odds with each other and the common idiom for describing two people who are always arguing is to say they are like “*il-ḥamā w-al- kinnī*” (a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law). The audience recognizes this and responds positively to this line. In line 14, Mousa incorporates another clever image when he says that he had hoped all of his efforts would have paid off and Zaghoul would “trade in the staff for an inkwell and pen.” Here Mousa refreshes everyone’s memory and revisits the staff image that has been mentioned several times already and has developed into an important thematic image over the course of the duel.

In lines 15 through the final single-hemistich closing line 17, Mousa completes the main thrust of his argument in this stanza, which is to persuade Zaghoul to “put down the staff,” stop with all the violent talk, and get back to composing good poetry. He tells Zaghoul that this approach is “shameful,” and he should stop harping on “that same tune,” especially in light of the fact that the “kings of poetry” are sitting beside him and the “kings of criticism” are staring him “in the eye.” Mousa’s last two hemistichs are strengthened by word play, whereby the expression used in the final hemistich, *kīf lak ʿayn* (how do you have an eye), an idiom similar to the English “to have the nerve,” pivots on the word *ʿayn* (eye), which appeared in the previous hemistich as part of the phrase “with the kings of criticism *‘iddām ʿaynak*”(in front of your **eye**).

### 3.4.2. First Closing *Qaṣīd* of Zaghoul al-Damour

لأنك رح بتوقع في بلاها

51:20 1a) Ōf..Ōf..Ya Mūsā kān falsaftak balāhā

1b) Owf..Owf..O Mousa, your philosophy was without it

1c) *Owf..Mousa, It'd be better to abandon your argument*

ولا شربت شفافك من دماها

51:34 2a) Ya raytak mā °ali't [i]b-hayk mabrad

2b) If only you hadn't gotten stuck in such a grater

2c) *If only you hadn't been rubbed on this rasp*

مثل ناعورة الضيق مداها

51:44 3a) Ilak sā°a °am [i]btinzal w tiş°ad

3b) You have for an hour been going down and up

3c) *You've been bobbing up and down for an hour*

١/ أوف...أوف...يا موسى كان فلسفتك بلاها

Li-°annak raḥ btū'a° fi balāhā<sup>281</sup>

Because you will fall into its calamity

*Because you're going to suffer its blows*

٢/ يا ريتك ما علقت بهيك مبرد

W lā shirbit [i]shfāfak min dimāhā

And didn't drink your lips from its blood

*And your lips didn't taste its blood*

٣/ الك ساعة عم بتنزل وتصعد

Mitil nā°ūrt-iḍ-ḍayyi' madāhā

Like a water-wheel and its constricted extent

*Like a water-wheel going around in circles*

<sup>281</sup> Zaghoul makes an effective pun in this line by using the same end word “balāhā” to mean “without it” and “its calamity”.

- ٤/ وانا عم بفتكر بمجال ابعد  
 تا اقطف كل نجمة من سماها  
 51:53 4a) [i]W anā ʿam biftikir b-[i]mjāl ʿabʿad  
 Ta iʾʿtuf kill nijmi min samāhā  
 4b) And I am thinking of a further range  
 So I can pluck each star from its sky  
 4c) *While my thoughts aim for more distant realms*  
*Where I can pluck each star from its sky*
- ٥/ انا عطيت لبنات الشعر موعد  
 على الزغلول طألت من خباها  
 52:03 5a) Anā ʿṭayt [i] l-banāt-ish-shiʿr mawʿad  
 [W] ʿAlā-Z-Zaghlūl ṭallit min khibāhā  
 5b) I gave to the daughters of poetry an appointment  
 Upon Zaghloul they peeked out from their hiding place  
 5c) *I granted the daughters of poetry a date*  
*They peeked out from their hiding place to see Zaghloul*
- ٦/ وبمشق القد والخذ المورّد  
 اجت عالدير تعرضلي صباها  
 52:12 6a) [i]W bi-mashiʾ-il-ʿadd w-il-khadd-il-[i]mwarrad  
 Ijit ʿad-dayr tiʿruḍ-lī šibāhā  
 6b) And with the form of the physique and the rosy cheek  
 They came to the monastery to show me their youthfulness  
 6c) *And with that slender form and those rosy cheeks*  
*They came here to parade their youthfulness for me*
- ٧/ عملت حالك ملك نحنا منشهد  
 ملك على مستواك بسمتواها  
 52:22 7a) [i]ʿmilit ḥālak malak niḥnā mnish-had  
 Malak ʿal mustawāk [i]b-mustawāhā  
 7b) You made yourself a king we bear witness  
 A king over your level with their level  
 7c) *You made yourself a king, but we are witnesses*  
*To the kind of king you really are*

تا هد المملكة علي بناها

٨/ وازا بتطلب بعرش الشعر مقعد

52:31 8a) [i]W ‘izā b-tiṭlub bi-‘arsh-ish-shi‘r ma’‘ad

Tā hidd-il-mamlaki ‘allī banāhā

8b) And if you request in the throne of poetry a seat

I will bring down the kingdom upon the one who built it

8c) *And if you ask to sit upon the throne of poetry*

*I will topple the whole kingdom on its builder*

وعبد، شفة وطى وشفة غطاها

٩/ الملك كافور متلك كان اسود

52:40 9a) Il-malak Kāfūr mitlak kām ‘aswad

W ‘abid, shiffī waṭā [i]w shiffī ghaṭāhā

9b) King Kafur<sup>282</sup> like you was black

And a slave, one lip down and a lip covering it

9c) *King Kafur was black just like you*

*And a slave, a fat lip hanging down and another like a lid on top*

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<sup>282</sup> The reference is to Kafur al-Ikhshidid (906-968), who was an Ethiopian slave who later became a ruler of Egypt of the Ikhshidid Dynasty.

- 52:50 10a) [i]W °inid-mā hājamū bi-sh-shi°r ‘Aḥmad Abu-Ṭ-Ṭayyib, lawa-l-kirsī w liwāhā
- 10b) And when attacked him with poetry Ahmad Abu Tayyib<sup>283</sup>, pulled the chair out from under him and the whole court
- 10c) *And when al-Mutanabbi attacked him in his poem He pulled the chair out from under him and his whole court*

- 53:00 11a) [i]W °aṣātu-l-jildak °alay-hā m°awwad ‘Abil mā yishtiri-z-zinjī -shtarāhā
- 11b) And his staff<sup>284</sup> that your skin to it is accustomed Before he bought the zinjī he bought it
- 11c) *And his staff, with which your skin is familiar He bought it before he bought the slave*

<sup>283</sup> Enjambment across the hemistichs. Also, the reference is to the famous 10<sup>th</sup> Century Arab poet, Ahmad Abu Tayyib al-Mutanabbi. Al-Mutanabbi's famous satirical poem, which would be well-known to the audience, makes fun of Kafur with the following lines: لا تشتر العبد إلا والعصا معه // إن العبيد لأنجاس مناكيد “Do not buy a slave without buying a staff too//Because slaves are dirty and repugnant.” The next line by al-Mutanabbi, which Zaghoul draws upon: لا يقبض الموت نفسا من نفوسهم // إلا وفي يده من “Death does not take one of their souls// Except with a long stick in hand because of its stench”. By making an allusion to these well-known lines, Zaghoul is simultaneously insulting Mousa's dark complexion and making an argument for the staff he continues to hold onto in his poetry despite Mousa's attack on him.

<sup>284</sup> The reference is to the stick/staff mentioned in al-Mutanabbi's poem.

١٢ / وانا رجعت دفعت ليرات ازود

تا احضى بهالعصا وجرك وراها

53:10 12a) [i]W ana rji<sup>ʕ</sup>t [i]dfa<sup>ʕ</sup>t līrāt ‘azwad

Ta iḥḍa b-ha-l-<sup>ʕ</sup>aṣā w jirrak warāhā

12b) And I returned and paid liras much more

In order to find this staff and drag you behind it

12c) *And I went and paid a whole lot more*

*So I could get this staff and drag you with it*

١٣ / حاج تنهّرّب وتزعل وتحدرد

كفاها خلط عالالم كفاها

53:19 13a) Ḥaj tit-harrab w tiz<sup>ʕ</sup>al w tiḥrad

Kafā-hā khalṭ <sup>ʕ</sup>a-l-<sup>ʕ</sup>ālam kafāhā

13b) Stop evading and getting upset and annoyed

Enough confusing people, enough of it

13c) *Stop evading the issue and acting hurt and annoyed*

*Enough trying to confuse everyone, enough!*

١٤ / اذا استتجدت في عيسى ومحمد

ما رح سيبك ولا برمي العصايي

53:26 14a) Izā stanjadit fī ‘Īsā w Muḥammad

Ma raḥ sībak wa lā birmī-l-<sup>ʕ</sup>aṣāyī

14b) If you appeal to Jesus and Muhammad

I won’t release you and I won’t toss aside the staff

14c) *Even if you appeal to Jesus and Muhammad*

*I won’t let go of you, I won’t throw away this staff*

١٥ / قبل ما تدور حراجل عزها

15a) ‘Abil-ma-tdawwir [i]Ḥrājil <sup>ʕ</sup>azāhā

15b) Before Hrajil<sup>285</sup> announces its mourning

15c) *Before Hrajil declares a day of mourning for you*

<sup>285</sup> Hrajil is Mousa’s hometown in Mount Lebanon.

### 3.4.2.1. Summary and Explication: First Closing *Qaṣīd* – Zaghoul [51:20 – 53:42]

Zaghoul's first closing *qaṣīd* consists of fifteen lines and features <sup>c</sup>*ajz* rhyme –*āhā* and *ṣadr* rhyme –*ad*. This combination of rhymes allows for a nice metrical balance with lines always ending on –*xāhā* (CVV-CVV), and first hemistichs ending on –*xad* (CVC). Further inspection of the *ṣadr* rhyme words reveals that they all consist of two short syllables of the form CVC-CVC (*mabrad*, *tiṣ<sup>c</sup>ad*, *ab<sup>c</sup>ad*, *maw<sup>c</sup>ad*, (m)*warrad*, (m)*nish-had*, *ma<sup>c</sup>ad*, *aswad*, *Aḥmad*, (m)*awwad*, *azwad*, *tiḥrad*, (Mu)*hammad*). Thus, each line of the stanza (excluding the first and penultimate) features this musical-metrical alternation of CVC-CVC at the end of the first hemistich and its opposite CVV-CVV at the end of the second hemistich. It is also important to note that the <sup>c</sup>*ajz* rhyme –*āhā* contains the grammatical pronoun suffix –*hā*, with possible meanings “her,” “it,” “its,” “their,” and “them.” Indeed, all of Zaghoul's <sup>c</sup>*ajz* rhymes exhibit this type of usage.

Zaghoul's stanza also features another type of alternation, between series of lines aimed at attacking Mousa using second person, and series of lines boasting about himself using first person. In lines 1 through 3, Zaghoul addresses Mousa directly, saying it would be better to “abandon your argument,” because “you will suffer its blows.” He tells Mousa too bad “you got stuck in a grater,” and “your lips have tasted blood.” He describes Mousa as a flip-flopper again, this time likening him to a water-wheel going around in circles.

In lines 4 through 6 Zaghoul switches to first person and contrasts himself with the sorry Mousa of the first three lines. While Mousa has been “bobbing up and down” Zaghoul has been busy aiming his thoughts at much more distant realms, where he can “pluck each star from its sky.” He introduces the image of the “daughters of poetry” whom he granted a date. Like



coquettish beauties they “peeked out from their hiding place” to catch a glimpse of the great Zaghoul. Then he makes a flirtatious innuendo to the women in the audience when he implies those beautiful daughters of poetry, with their “slender form and rosy cheeks” came “here,” to Beit Mery that is, to “parade their youthfulness” before Zaghoul.

In lines 7 through 11, Zaghoul switches his focus back on Mousa and through a series of very brutal insults, finds his way back to the issue of the staff. In line 7, Zaghoul reminds everyone how Mousa has called himself a “King,” but goes on to snicker at “the kind of king you really are.” In line 8 he tells Mousa that if Mousa were to ask to sit upon “the throne of poetry,” he would bring down the whole kingdom “upon its builder” (i.e. Zaghoul himself). In line 9, Zaghoul likens Mousa to King Kafur, with reference to Kafur al-Ikhshidid (906-968), an Ethiopian slave who later became a ruler of Egypt of the Ikhshidid Dynasty. As we have seen earlier, Zaghoul is making a personal insult on Mousa for his dark complexion, and makes this very clear when he describes him in extremely racially derogatory terms (“King Kafur was black like you, a slave with a fat lip hanging down and another like a lid on top”). This idea leads to Zaghoul’s next two lines in which he alludes to a satirical poem by the famous 10<sup>th</sup> century Arab poet Al-Mutanabbi delivered to the historical King Kafur after giving up hopes of attaining a position in King Kafur’s court at the time<sup>286</sup>. In particular, Zaghoul is alluding to the following lines containing the all-important image of the staff:

لا تشتري العبد إلا والعصا معه      إن العبيد لأنجاس مناكيد  
لا يقبض الموت نفساً من نفوسهم      إلا وفي يده من نتنها عود

Do not buy a slave without buying a staff too // Because slaves are dirty and repugnant

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<sup>286</sup> For the complete poem with English translation, see “A Satire Against Kāfūr” in Arberry’s *Poems of al-Mutanabbī* (106-122).

Death does not take one of their souls // Except with a long stick in hand because of its stench

In Lines 10 and 11, Zaghoul uses the allusion to al-Mutanabbi's poem to redefine once more the image of the staff and justify his clinging to it during his duel with Mousa. While simultaneously equating Mousa with King Kafur, the target of al-Mutanabbi's successful attack, and himself with al-Mutanabbi, who singlehandedly "pulled the chair out from under him and his whole court," Zaghoul extends the staff image and now claims to have bought it from al-Mutanabbi at a much higher price than al-Mutanabbi paid for it before "buying the slave" (King Kafur). This staff, which Zaghoul describes as something "with which your skin (Mousa) is familiar," is what Zaghoul will use to drag Mousa's dead (and stinking) carcass with at the end of the battle.

In the remaining lines of the stanza, Zaghoul insists on sticking to the staff, blames Mousa for trying to evade the issue and trying to confuse everyone. He tells Mousa that even if he were to appeal to "Jesus and Muhammad" he will not let go of Mousa, will not let go of the staff, and won't stop beating him until "Hrajl (Mousa's hometown) declares a day of mourning" for him.

### 3.4.3. Second Closing *Qaṣīd* of Mousa Zoghayb

وحديثك بالقتل عم تستهلّو

١/ أوخ...وكمال السيف بعدك عم تسلو

53:43 1a) Ōkh..[i]w kamān-is-sayf ba<sup>c</sup>dak <sup>c</sup>am[i] tsillū

[i]W ḥadīsak bi-l-‘atil <sup>c</sup>am tisit-hillū

1b) Owkh..and again the sword you are still withdrawing it

And your talk about killing you are striking it up

1c) *Owf..again you draw your sword*

*And keep prefacing your talk with killing*

شو زنب الناس خليهن يفألّو

٢/ اذا بدك تضلّ بهيك مطلع

53:54 2a) Izā baddak[i] tḍall [i]b-hayk matla<sup>c287</sup>

Shū zanb-in-nās khallīhun [i]yfillū

2b) If you want to stay on this kind of prelude

What fault is it of the people let them leave

2c) *If you want to dwell on this kind of prelude*

*Why make the people suffer; let them leave*

<sup>287</sup> Ziadeh's transcript reads: اذا مش رح تغير هيك مطلع *Iza mish raḥ tghayyir hayk maṭla<sup>c</sup>* (If you're not going to change such a premise)

- وقلي انت شو ييجوز قلّو      ٣/ بربك يا حكم احكم واسمع
- 54:01 3a) Bi-rabbak yā ḥakam iḥkum w isma<sup>c288</sup>      W ‘illī int shū biyjūz ‘illū<sup>289</sup>
- 3b) By your God, O judge, judge and listen      And you tell me what I should tell him
- 3c) *I beg you, Judges, listen and make your ruling*      *And tell me what I should say to this guy*
- جرم والشرع مش ممكن يحلّو      ٤/ بقلّو تنيننا من فرد مقلع
- 54:10 4a) [i]B-‘illū tnaynnā min fard ma’la<sup>c</sup>      Jurum w-ish-shari<sup>c</sup> mish mumkin yḥillū
- 4b) I tell him the two of us are of one quarry      A crime and the law is impossible to unravel
- 4c) *Shall I tell him we two are hewn from the same quarry*      *A crime not even the law can undo*
- الغمز واللمز عنو ما تخلّو      ٥/ قرينا بشبكة "الجرداق" مطلع
- 54:18 5a) [i]‘rīnā b-shabkit-il-Jirdā’ maṭla<sup>c</sup>      [i]L -ghamiz w-il-lamiz ‘annū mā tkhallū
- 5b) We read in the net of Jirdaq<sup>290</sup> a prelude      Winking and backbiting about it they didn’t stop<sup>291</sup>
- 5c) *We read a prelude in Jirdaq’s book*      *The winking and backbiting went on and on*

<sup>288</sup> Ziadeh’s transcript reads: يا تقيب الحكي اسمع *Yā na ‘īb-il-ḥakī isma<sup>c</sup>* (O master of talk, judge and listen)

<sup>289</sup> Ziadeh’s transcript reads: شو معقول قلّو *Shū ma<sup>c</sup>’ūl ‘illū* (What would be reasonable for me to tell him)

<sup>290</sup> The reference is to Lebanese poet George Jirdaq (b. 1933).

<sup>291</sup> This appears to be an example of enjambment spilling into the next line.

- ازا تعبیرها کان بمحلّو
- 54:28 6a) Ḥa'ī'a w-il-ḥa'ī'a shū btūja<sup>c</sup> Izā ta<sup>c</sup>bīr-hā kān [i]b-maḥallū
- 6b) A truth and truth how it hurts If its expression is in its place
- 6c) *A single truth and Oh how truth hurts* *When told when it should be told*
- عن الجو الغرق غيرو بزّلّو
- 54:35 7a) Yā nā'id bas fī shā'ir traffa<sup>c292</sup> 'An-ij-jaww-il-ghara' ghayrū bi-zillū
- 7b) O critic, there is only one poet lifted himself From the atmosphere that drowned others in its shame
- 7c) *O critic, there's only one poet who lifted himself* *Out of this situation that caused others to drown in shame*
- مجال النقد نرجع نستحلّو
- 54:43 8a) W ana miḥtār mitlak shū byimna<sup>c</sup> Majāl-in-na'id<sup>293</sup> nirja<sup>c</sup> nisit-ḥillū
- 8b) And I am wondering like you what prevents The realm of criticism we go back and take it over
- 8c) *I too am wondering, what's to stop us* *From battling again in this realm of criticism*

<sup>292</sup> In Ziadeh's transcript this is given as: يا جرداق *Yā Jirdā'* (O Jirdaa') rather than *Yā nā'id* (O critic)

<sup>293</sup> Ziadeh's transcript gives جو النقد *jaw-in-na'd* (atmosphere of criticism) rather than مجال النقد *majāl-in-na'd* (realm of criticism).

رغيفو والغني عم يستغلو

54:50 9a) [i]W niḥkī °a-l-fa'īr-il-ma b-yishba°

9b) And we talk of the poor man who doesn't satiate him

9c) *And to talk of the poor hungry people*

وضاع وما التقى مخلص يدلو

54:59 10a) W niḥkī °a-l-yatīm-il-°am [i]b-yidma°

10b) And we talk about the orphan who is tearing up

10c) *And to talk of orphans with tears in their eyes*

وطير وعلم جناحك يعلاو

55:07 11a) Yā Zaghlūl min ha-s-sijin 'iṭla°

11b) O Zaghloul from this prison go out

11c) *Zaghloul, break out of this prison*

٩/ ونحكي عالفقير الما بيشبع

Rghīfu<sup>294</sup> w-il-ghani °am yisitghillū

his loaf of bread and the rich man exploiting it

*Whose daily bread the rich man exploits*

١٠/ ونحكي عاليتم العم بيدمع

W ḍā° w ma-l-ta'ā mikhliṣ ydillū<sup>295</sup>

And is lost and didn't find a virtuous soul to direct him

*Lost with no honest soul to show them the way*

١١/ يا زغلول من هالسجن اطلع

W ṭīr w °allim [i]jnāḥak y°allū

And fly and teach your wings to go up high

*Fly and teach your wings to soar high*

<sup>294</sup> Enjambment across the hemistichs.

<sup>295</sup> Note the parallel structure in lines 9 and 10

55:18 12a) Ma<sup>c</sup>ak shā<sup>c</sup>ir ‘ilū āfā’ awsa<sup>c</sup>

W ab<sup>c</sup>ad ma ghuzāt-ij-jaww ḥallū

12b) With you a poet he has wider horizons

And farther than the invaders of space alighted

12c) *With you here is a poet of vast horizons*

*Farther than the space invaders reach*

جنودو منين ما طَلّو يطلّوا

١٣ / أنا من الموت ما تَعَوَّدت افزع

55:26 13a) Ana min-il-mawt ma ta<sup>c</sup>awwadit ifza<sup>c</sup>

Junūdu mnayn mā ṭallū yiṭullū

13b) I from death did not get accustomed to fear

Its soldiers from wherever they loom they loom

13c) *I’ve never grown accustomed to fearing death*

*No matter from where its soldiers loom*

سنينو قد ما زادوا وقلّوا

١٤ / حيث الموت للانسان مرجع

55:32 14a) Ḥays il-mawt<sup>296</sup> lil-insān marja<sup>c</sup>

Snīnū ‘add mā zādū<sup>297</sup> w ‘allū

14b) Because death to the human being is an authority

His years no matter how they increased or decreased

14c) *Since death to man is inescapable*

*Now matter how many or few his years*

<sup>296</sup> Ziadeh’s transcript gives ما زال الموت *Mā zāl il-mawt* (As long as death...) rather than حيث الموت *Ḥayth il-mawt* (Whereas death...).

<sup>297</sup> Ziadeh’s transcript gives قد ما كثرّوا وقلّوا *‘add mā kitrū w ‘allū* (as much as they were many or were few) rather than قد ما زادوا وقلّوا *‘add mā zādū w ‘allū* (as much as they increased or were few (decreased)).

١٥ / ان طلبتني الأرض للأرض ارجع

قطار اللا نهاية يستقلو

55:40 15a)<sup>298</sup> In ṭalbitnī-l-arḍ lil-arḍ irja<sup>c</sup>

‘ṭār-il-lā nihāyi bisit’illū

15b) If the earth requested me back to earth to return

The train of eternity I will ride it

15c) *And if the dust calls for my return to dust*

*I will hop right on the train to eternity*

مجد موسى ز غيب ومجد "خلو"

١٦ / وبموت بخاطري تا الموت يجمع

55:47 16a) W[i] b-mūt bkhāṭrī ta-l-mawt yijma<sup>c299</sup>

Majid Mūsā Zghayb w-majid “Khillū”<sup>300</sup>

16b) And I die on my own accord so death can join

The glory of Mousa Zoghayb and the glory of “Khillu”

16c) *I would die willingly so death could join*

*The glory of Mousa Zoghayb with that of Khalil Rukuz*

بموتي بس ما يتفجع "حراجل"

١٧ / وتا تعرف بموتي شو بتفجع

55:55 17a) [i]W tā ti<sup>c</sup>rif [i]b-mawtī shū btifja<sup>c</sup>

B-mawtī bass mā btifja<sup>c</sup> [i]Hrājil

17b) And so to know my death what grief it would cause

My death not only bereaves Hrajil

17c) *Let me tell you what kind of grief my death would stir*

*Not only would my death make Hrajil mourn*

<sup>298</sup> Entire line was left out of Ziadeh’s transcript.

<sup>299</sup> Ziadeh’s transcript gives تالرب يجمع *ta-r-rabb yijma<sup>c</sup>* (for the Lord to gather together) rather than تالموت يجمع *ta-l-mawt yijma<sup>c</sup>* (for Death to gather together).

<sup>300</sup> Mousa is using a diminutive of Khalil (Khillū) in reference to Khalil Rukuz.



٨١ / بموتي بينفجع لبنان كلو

18a) [i]B-mawtī byinfaja<sup>c</sup> Libnān killū

18b) With my death all of Lebanon would be bereaved

18c) *All of Lebanon would be wailing and weeping over me*

### 3.4.3.1. Summary and Explication: Second Closing *Qaṣīd* – Mousa [53:43 – 56:09]

Mousa's second closing *qaṣīd* is an eighteen-line stanza featuring <sup>ʿ</sup>*ajz* rhyme *-illū* and *ṣadr* rhyme *-a<sup>c</sup>*. Though not in the exact manner as Zaghoul's first closing *qaṣīd*, these two rhyme forms also offer a metrical alternation whereby the end rhymes are CVV syllables and the first hemistich rhymes are CVC. Also similar to Zaghoul's stanza is the use of a grammatical suffix for the <sup>ʿ</sup>*ajz* rhyme, but not the *ṣadr* rhyme. The final *-ū* of Mousa's <sup>ʿ</sup>*ajz* rhyme has two main uses as a suffix: pronoun suffix meaning "him," "his," "it," or "its" and plural verb suffix (for second or third person plural subject pronoun). In Mousa's stanza, nine of his <sup>ʿ</sup>*ajz* rhymes are of the former type and seven are of the latter.

In his first two lines, Mousa once again shows his frustration with Zaghoul's insistence on violent talk. He expresses his empathy for the audience, saying "Why make the people suffer; let them leave!" In line 3 he addresses the judges, begging them for advice on how to deal "with this guy." In lines 4 through 6, Mousa makes reference to a *maṭla<sup>c</sup>* (prelude) he read in "the net of Jirdaq," and the fallout from critics, "winking and backbiting," and describes this as being a type of "truth" that was told, which can sometimes hurt. It is not clear to what specific event Mousa is referring, but the thrust of his argument seems to be pointing out Zaghoul's inadequacy as a *zajal* poet.

In lines 7 through 10, Mousa again tries to persuade Zaghoul to change his tone to more poetic topics, or to aim his talk away from violence and towards lifting up humanity. He offers, for example, "talk of the poor, hungry people, whose daily bread the rich man exploits," or "talk of orphans with tears in their eyes," or "those who are lost with no honest soul to show them the way."

In line 11 Mousa pleads with Zaghoul directly, begging him to “break out of this prison,” urging him, with a return to bird imagery, to “fly and teach your wings to soar.” And in lines 12 and 13, he offers himself as a great example for Zaghoul to follow. He describes himself as “a poet of vast horizons” who has gone to the furthest reaches of space, even “farther than the space invaders reached.” He boasts of his bravery, his lack of fear of “death,” which we remember was the image we were left with at the end of Zaghoul’s stanza when he closed with the hemistich about Hrajl declaring a day of mourning for the death of its native son Mousa. It is at this point that Mousa begins to form his crescendo towards his stanza finale. Mousa builds his argument in lines 14 through 16 as follows: I have never feared death, no matter from where its soldiers loom, since death is inescapable, no matter the number of a man’s days, and if death calls for my return to the dust, I will hop right on that train to eternity, I will die willingly, in order to be glorified as I reunite with the glorious Rukuz. His finale is a resounding blow to Zaghoul’s last line. Mousa accepts Zaghoul’s death sentence with the kind of heroism that not only will be appreciated by the villagers of Hrajl, but which will stir the grief of the whole of Lebanon, causing an uproar of weeping and wailing over his death. This is an extremely powerful and effective finale from Mousa as he cleverly presents himself as a hero for all of Lebanon, felled by the violent Zaghoul who lacks the poetic prowess to duel over matters that are important to the people and to raising Lebanon to new heights.

### 3.4.4. Second Closing *Qaṣīd* of Zaghoul al-Damour

أنا البلبل سمع صوتي تا غنّى

56:10 1a) Ōf..Ōf..Ōf..taghannā yā shi<sup>c</sup>r fiyyī tghannā

1b) Owf..owf..sing O poetry my praises sing

1c) *Owf..Sing, poetry, sing out my praises*

لو ما بنور اشعاري تحنّى

56:22 2a) [i]W ‘amar Nīsān kān iṣfarr khaddū

2b) The moon of April would have yellow cheeks

2c) *The April moon would have turned pale*

قبل ما تلفظ الكلمة تأتى

56:33 3a) Ya Mūsā sayf<sup>c</sup>izzak ṣām ḥaddū

3b) O Mousa, the sword of your greatness its sharpness fasted

3c) *Mousa, the swordblade of your greatness has gotten dull*

١/ أوف...أوف...أوف...تغنّى يا شعر فيي تغنّى

Ana-l-bilbul simi<sup>c</sup> ṣawtī ta ghannā

I the songbird heard my voice in order to sing

*The songbird learned to sing when he heard my voice*

٢/ وقمر نيسان كان اصفرّ خدّو

Law ma-b-nūr ash<sup>c</sup>ārī<sup>301</sup> tḥannā

If not for the light of my poetry it got tattooed with henna

*If not for my poetry tattooing it with henna*

٣/ يا موسى سيف عزك صام حدّو

‘Abil mā tilfuḏ-il-kilmī [i]t’annā

Before you pronounce a word be careful

*Be careful before uttering a word*

<sup>301</sup> Ziadeh’s transcript gives قصداني ‘iṣdānī (my qasids) rather than اشعاري ash<sup>c</sup>ārī (my poetry).

	خسارة عا شعب احمد وحنّا	٤/ انت لو متّ موتك ما بعدّو
56:42	4a) Init law mitt mawtak mā b <sup>c</sup> iddū	Khsāra ʿā sha <sup>c</sup> b Aḥmad w Ḥannā
	4b) You if you die I would not consider it	A loss to the people of Ahmad and Hanna <sup>302</sup>
	4c) <i>If you were to die I wouldn't consider that</i>	<i>A great loss to Muslims and Christians</i>
	وبحب صحابها قلبي تهنّا	٥/ وحر اجل اسمها الخالد بودّو
56:52	5a) [i]W Ḥarājil ʿisimhā il-khālīd [i]bwiddū	W b-ḥibb ṣ-ḥāb-hā ʿalbī [i]thannā
	5b) And Hrajl <sup>303</sup> its everlasting name I love it	And with the love of its people my heart rejoiced
	5c) <i>And Hrajl, whose everlasting name I adore</i>	<i>And for whose people my loving heart swells with joy</i>
	لأنّو اليوم عا حالو تجنّي	٦/ قالت مات الله لا يردّو
57:04	6a) ʿālit māt Allah lā yriddū	Li-ʿannū-l-yawm ʿā ḥālū tajannā
	6b) It said he died may God never bring him back	Because today he on himself committed a crime
	6c) <i>Said, "So he died; may God never send him back"</i>	<i>Because today he caused his own demise</i>

<sup>302</sup> Zaghoul uses the names Ahmad and Hanna (which fit the meter and rhyme) as metonyms for Muslims and Christians.

<sup>303</sup> Again, the reference here is to Mousa's hometown.

لأَنُو بِيَعْرِفُ الْاَرَزَ الْمَكْنَى

57:13 7a) ʿalayyī lāzim il-mitlak yriddū

7b) To me people like you should respond

7c) *People like you should respond to me*

أَنَا بِي اللَّي قَبْلَكَ غَابَ عَنَّا

57:21 8a) Anā bayyak li-bayyak būs yaddū

8b) I am the father of your father kiss his hand

8c) *I am your father's father; kiss this hand*

وَبِي الرَّمْحَ وَشَفَارَ الْاَسْنَةِ

57:29 9a) Anā bay-illī rifʿā t-ḥaddū

9b) I am the father of all those my friends dared

9c) *I am the father of all those my friends challenged*

٧/ عَلَيَّ لِاَزِمِ الْمَتْلَكُ يَرْدُو

Li-ʿannū byaʿrif-il-arz-il-mukannā

Because the well-known cedars know

*Because, as the great cedars know*

٨/ أَنَا بِيَّكَ لِبَيْتِكَ بَوْس يَدُّو

Anā bayy-illī ʿablak ghāb ʿannā

I am the father of the one who before departed<sup>304</sup> from us

*I am the father of the dear, departed one*

٩/ أَنَا بِي اللَّي رِفْقَاتِي تَحْدُو

W bay-ir-rimiḥ w[i] shfār-il-ʿasinnā

And the father of the spear and the blades<sup>305</sup> of swords

*And the father of the spear and the sharp blades of swords*

<sup>304</sup> Zaghloul is alluding to Khalil Rukuz.

<sup>305</sup> There is an allusion here to al-Mutanabbi's great boasting line: الخيل والليل والبيداء تعرفني والسيف والرمح والقرطاس والقلم Horses and the night and the desert know me well// And so does the sword and the spear and the paper and the pen

١٠ / وانا ولاد الزكا ولادي انعدوا

انا مربّي الزجل تا الشعر جنى

57:36 10a) [i]W ana wlād-iz-zakā [i]wlādī n<sup>c</sup>addū

Anā mrabbi-z-zajal tā-sh-shi<sup>c</sup>r jannā

10b) And I the children of intelligence my children are considered I am the rearer of *zajal* until poetry yielded harvest

10c) *All the brilliant children in the world are my children I am the one who reared zajal and made poetry yield a harvest*

١١ / وازا مت و عليك الناس حدوا

مش كرمالك ببيكي وطننا

57:47 11a) W izā mitt w[i]<sup>c</sup>layk-in-nās ḥaddū

Mish kirmālak [i]byibkī waṭannā

11b) If you die and people mourn you

It's not for your sake our homeland weeps

11c) *If you die and people mourn for you*

*It's not for your sake our homeland would weep*

١٢ / كرامة والدك لبنان بدو

بيكي دم عنا وغير عنا

57:56 12a) Karāmit wāldak Libnān baddū

Yibkī damm <sup>c</sup>innā w ghayr <sup>c</sup>innā

12b) For the sake of your father Lebanon wants to

Weep<sup>306</sup> blood in our place and other than our place

12c) *But for your father's sake Lebanon would*

*weep tears of blood here and everywhere*

<sup>306</sup> There is an instance of enjambment across the hemistich.

58:04 13a) Ya anṣār-il-[i]m<sup>ʿ</sup>annā il-fikir ḥiddū

W shūfū wayn kān [i]w wayn kinnā

13b) O supporters of ma<sup>ʿ</sup>anna the thinking prepare it

And see where he has been and where we have been

13c) *Aficionados of ma<sup>ʿ</sup>anna, reign in your thoughts*

*See where he has been and where we are*

تا تعطوا كل شاعر ما تمنّى

١٤ / ويا حكام للحكم استعدّوا

58:12 14a) W yā ḥikkām lil-ḥikm [i]st<sup>ʿ</sup>iddū

Tā ti<sup>ʿ</sup>tū kill shā<sup>ʿ</sup>ir mā tamannā

14b) O judges, for judging get ready

To give every poet what he wished for

14c) *Judges, get ready to make your judgement*

*And give every poet what his heart desires*

بيحييكن يا اعلی ناس منّا

١٥ / وهلق كل ضد قبال ضدّو

58:21 15a) [i]W halla' kill ḍidd [i]‘bāl ḍiddū

Bi-yḥayyīkun yā aghlā nās minnā

15b) And now every opponent facing his opponent

Salutes you O most cherished people among us

15c) *And now, facing his foe, each opponent*

*Salutes you, the most cherished people of all*



58:30 16a) W tā yib'ā ha-sh-shi'c marfū'c ḥaddū

Allah yidīmkun w yḍall dāyim

16b) And for this poetry to stay elevated its borders

May God keep you and let remain eternal

16c) *And so that this poetry will stay exalted, high**May God keep you and keep eternal*

١٧ / ارز لبنان وليالي المعنّى

17a) Ariz Libnān w[i]lyālī-l-ma'annā

17b) The cedars of Lebanon and the nights of ma'anna<sup>307</sup>17c) *The cedars of Lebanon and the nights of ma'anna*

<sup>307</sup> Note the excessive enjambment throughout and especially in the last half of Zaghoul's *qaṣīd*. Not only do the ideas spill over the separation between hemistichs, but the ends of lines spill into subsequent lines. Note in Zaghoul's singing, as well, that the ends of lines are not accentuated with melisma in the usual way, but rather seem to begin the next line instead. This is easy to hear at the ends of lines 5, 8 and 11. It is as if Zaghoul is impatiently speeding headlong toward his (and all the poets') most cherished ending: *ma'anna*.

### 3.4.4.1. Summary and Explication: Second Closing *Qaṣīd* – Zaghoul [53:43 – end (59:10)]

Zaghoul's second closing *qaṣīd* is the final stanza of the duel. It consists of 17 lines and features <sup>ʿ</sup>*ajz* rhyme –*annā* and *ṣadr* rhyme –*addū*. Having seen now, repeatedly, that the opening rhyme of the stanza can give us a clue to the clincher rhyme at the very end of the stanza, it is no surprise when we reach Zaghoul's last hemistich and find that it ends with the word *ma<sup>ʿ</sup>annā*, which is used interchangeably with “*zajal*” to mean Lebanese oral poetry. However, we will leave further discussion of the final closing *qaṣīd*'s last words until later.

The two rhymes Zaghoul incorporates into his stanza, –*annā* and –*addū* are identical in syllabic quality this time – VCCVV. The long vowel ending to each rhyme allows for more opportunities for long melismata, and each also provides the poet with ample choices since both are grammatical suffixes. The final *ā* of the <sup>ʿ</sup>*ajz* rhyme –*annā* is a pronoun suffix meaning “her,” “it,” “its,” “them,” or “their” and can also stem from the presence of the feminine suffix, which in Lebanese is sometimes pronounced as “a” as in Standard Arabic (al-Fuṣḥā), rather than “i” as we have seen many times. The final *nā* of the <sup>ʿ</sup>*ajz* rhyme –*annā* is also another pronoun suffix meaning “our” or “us,” and it is the past tense verb suffix for first person plural (we). The final *ū* of the *ṣadr* rhyme –*addū* is the suffix with two main purposes, either as pronoun suffix meaning “his,” “him,” “it,” or “its” or as second- or third-person plural verb suffix. It is interesting to note that while Zaghoul's rhymes provide ample opportunity to exploit grammatical suffixes, which he does for every single one of his *ṣadr* rhymes –*addū*, this only accounts for six of his <sup>ʿ</sup>*ajz* rhymes: <sup>ʿ</sup>*annā* (from us) in line 8, –<sup>ʿ</sup>*asinnā* (blades) in line 9, *waṭannā* (our homeland) in line 11, <sup>ʿ</sup>*innā* (at us) in line 12, *kinnā* (we were) in line 13, and *minnā* (from us) in line 15. All but one of these is related to the first-person plural suffixes “our,” or “us,” or “we,” which in a subtle way helps Zaghoul as he works his way toward an ending that aims to

reunite the opposing teams of poets under the unifying umbrella of *ma<sup>c</sup>annā*. A larger number of Zaghoul's *ʿajz* rhymes, which do not exhibit any of the possible grammatical suffixes mentioned, have something else in common: they are all form II past tense weak verbs ending in *alif maqṣūra*. As such, they all have a syllabic pattern identical to the final word "*ma<sup>c</sup>annā*" which we might describe as *CaCannā* whereby only two consonants vary from one rhyme to the next. The seven rhymes that fit this pattern are: *taghannā* (sing), *ta ghannā* (in order that he sang), *taḥannā* (tattooed with henna), *ta'annā* (be careful), *tahannā* (rejoiced), *tajannā* (committed a crime), and *tamannā* (he wished). The repetition of words that not only rhyme with the final word *ma<sup>c</sup>annā* but echo its entire syllabic structure only helps to strengthen its already strong impact.

Zaghoul begins his stanza with the expected invocation, this time calling out to poetry, asking it to "sing his praises." He ends his first line with the boastful claim that "the songbird learned to sing when he heard my voice." This opening line begins with a long and beautiful "Owf...Owf...Owf," followed by a hemistich that begins and ends with the imperative verb *tghannā* (Sing!). Zaghoul then sings the homonym, "ta ghannā" at the end of the second hemistich, this time with the different but related meaning, "in order that he sang". In the second line Zaghoul delivers a beautiful poetic image, describing the April moon as being colored by his poetry as if tattooed by henna.

In lines 3 through 6, Zaghoul's attention is on Mousa and finding more and more ways to insult him and undermine his arguments. He begins by telling him that "the sword blade" of his greatness "has dulled," and that he should be careful before uttering a word. He tells Mousa that his death would not be a great loss, to Muslims or to Christians, and even the people of Hrajl wouldn't care if he died. Indeed, they would blame his demise on his own bad actions.

In lines 7 through 12, Zaghoul switches his efforts to boasting and to presenting himself this time as a father figure. He begins by patronizing Mousa, telling him he should answer to his elder – his own grandfather – and kiss his hand. He calls himself “the father of the dear, departed one,” with reference again to their beloved mentor Khalil Rukuz. He says he is also father of “all those my friends challenged, the father of the spear and the sharp blades of swords.” All of the brilliant children of the world are Zaghoul’s children. At this point, half-way through line 10, Zaghoul claims to be the father and “rearer of *zajal*” who made poetry itself yield a harvest. And in lines 11 and 12 Zaghoul attempts to destroy Mousa’s argument from the previous stanza. We remember that Mousa ended with the image of the whole of Lebanon weeping and wailing in lament over his death. Now in Lines 11 and 12, Zaghoul tells Mousa that if he dies and people mourn for him, it’s not for his sake the homeland would weep, but for the sake of “your father” that they would weep tears of blood. This is the last time in the duel that either of the opponents will undo the other’s argument and recast an image in his own favor. At this point, before Zaghoul turns his attention to the judges, the audience, and to the task of closing the duel on a positive note, he leaves us with the image of himself as the forefather of his nation’s best gift to the world – *zajal* poetry. And this is the direction he takes as he leaves Mousa and addresses the judges. He asks them to get ready to make their judgment and to be generous, “give every poet what his heart desires.” He describes the poets like soldiers, facing one another with a spirit of sportsmanship, saluting the judges, the “most cherished people of all.” And as we have been expecting from the first rhyme, Zaghoul closes the duel with an exaltation of *zajal* poetry and a prayer that God will keep eternal the two most valuable and cherished things: the cedars of Lebanon and the nights of *ma<sup>c</sup>anna*.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Much of the driving force behind this dissertation was a desire to understand how *zajal* poets are able to do what they do, that is, to successfully compose and deliver hundreds of rhymed, metered verses filled with powerful imagery and compelling arguments over the course of several hours of uninterrupted performance before a critical and demanding audience. After looking at a specific duel through the magnifying lens of translation, it is now possible to clearly see the various components of the oral-formulaic composition process at work. These I have noted in detail throughout Chapter Three in footnoted running commentary as well as in the explications interspersed between sections, exchanges, and long stanzas. Some of the recurring oral-formulaic strategies include a number of “poetic license”-type strategies, such as the shortening of words or the lengthening of vowels in order to fit the musical or poetic meter or the use of what might be called imprecise images that fit the rhyme and meter. Poets depend on formulaic systems and substitutions in order to compose lines quickly and fluidly. Repetition of formulaic words and expressions or repetition of hemistichs and lines also enables poets to compose quickly and improvise on the spot without causing a pause in singing. Above all, poets rely on the nature of the Arabic language itself which has an unending capacity to produce words that rhyme as well as words that share morphological patterns or etymological roots. The presence of a chorus of *riddādi* provides the poets with a musical backbone and constant encouragement that is also echoed by an appreciative and critical audience. *Zajal* poets spend decades in apprenticeship and are constantly practicing their art both on and off the *zajal* stage.

The combination of heavy competition and public enthusiasm creates the perfect, inexhaustible machine that should ensure the continuation of *zajal* into future decades and for generations. Indeed, the art of Lebanese *zajal* shows no signs of dying out, despite the many distractions posed by modern society with its lightning speed sources of entertainment. As Zaghoul al-Damour himself put it, “The continuous practice of the profession insures its survival...never worry about *zajal* continuing after me...*Zajal* will never die out...new talents are always present, and there are many natural born poets...*Zajal* will continue on after me, no doubt about it” (El-Hage, “Part One” 16). When asked if *zajal* poets go through “dry spells,” Zaghoul had the following comments:

Very rarely, not commonly. When a *zajal* poet takes the stage he is in a constant state of transfiguration; the *zajal* stage is the stage of emanation and regeneration, and the act of facing an audience is always a confrontation with improvisation, and a touchstone for ingenuity. The audience is the wellspring, the source of poetic utterance that causes the waters to flow and tears down all obstructions. The audience stimulates the senses and the sentiments and hones talent. The *zajal* poet on the stage is in a state of “transition” while on the stage. He gets inspiration from the occasion, and the occasion is always new and wonderful and demanding all at once. The surge of excitement opens the pathways of creativity, lets poetic bounty flow forth from its hiding places, and inspires the *zajal* poet with verses and ideas and instinctive responses and spontaneous verses. A great poet is not afraid of a tough competitor, but rather seeks him out and invites him to the arena of song and verbal dueling. (El-Hage, “Part One” 17)

Having traveled myself to Lebanon nearly every summer for the past twenty years, including this past summer of 2014, I can confirm the continued presence of *zajal* poets and *zajal* parties as a major part of the entertainment scene. Posters advertising upcoming events and featuring long-established *jawqas* and experienced poets as well as new *jawqas* and aspiring young poets are visible all over the place and sometimes fill giant billboards dotting the main highways.

In addition to the importance of oral-formulaic composition strategies to the art of Lebanese *zajal*, it is also worth noting the important role *zajal* plays in Lebanese society itself. After all, every verbal duel constitutes a type of dialogue, a special kind of conversation between representative members of an extremely diverse society. In so many ways, verbal dueling is a game of opposites. Poets often resort to using opposites in their lines, they argue over opposing sides such as old and young, war and peace, freedom and imprisonment. They seat themselves in alternating order so that each poet is beside an opponent. And moreover, they are teamed up with members of different religious groups. All of this makes for an exciting display of diversity of ideas as well as identities.

Lebanon, too, is a land where opposites converge. Located on the Mediterranean Sea between Syria to the north and east and Palestine/Israel to the south, Lebanon has always found itself at the crossroads between civilizations. From ancient times it has been of great interest to nations around the world and the situation is no different today. Lebanon's terrain is also a world of contrasts: high mountains and miles of seacoast, all squeezed together into a very narrow geographic area. (Though measuring only 10,452 square kilometers in its modern-day borders – roughly the size of Connecticut – due to its very high mountainous terrain, the Lebanese are fond of saying that if you just iron it out, it would be bigger than Texas!) In several months of the year, one can literally ski in the mountains in the morning and swim in the sea in the afternoon. Lebanon's population is similarly diverse. It has eighteen religious denominations spanning the spectrum of both Islam and Christianity. In addition, there are a number of sizeable ethnic groups in Lebanon, such as Armenians and Kurds, as well as nationals of neighboring Arab countries, such as Syrians and Egyptians.

There are six major confessional groups in Lebanon – three Christian and three Muslim. In the Christian category, there are Maronites, Greek Orthodox, and Greek Catholics. In the Muslim category, there are Sunni Muslims, Shiite Muslims, and Druze. (While the Druze are often grouped as Muslims or described as an offshoot of Islam, they are actually neither Muslim nor Christian, but a somewhat mysterious and secretive religion.) In the arena of government and politics, Lebanon's multi-confessional nature is an integral part of day-to-day governing and political dialogue. Adding to this, numerous political parties also abound in Lebanon, including the Syrian Nationalist Party, Baathists, Arab Nationalists, Phalangists, Lebanese Forces, Hizbollah, etc. There are more than eighty political parties in little Lebanon; in fact, politics might be the only practice that surpasses verbal dueling as a 'national pastime'.

I mention all of this in order to draw attention to the importance of the confessional and political system in verbal dueling. The members of most *jawqas* reflect the religious pluralism of Lebanese society. Usually in each *jawqa* there is a Maronite Christian, a Shiite Muslim, a Druze, and possibly a Greek Orthodox Christian. Rarely is there a Sunni Muslim member, however, as there are very few Sunni *zajal* poets in general, owing to geography and demographics: *zajal* developed primarily as a form of entertainment in the mountains of Lebanon and Sunni communities historically inhabited coastal regions.

In his opening chapter to *Critical Discourse Analysis*, Norman Fairclough makes a strong case for a critical approach to discourse analysis which aims to investigate verbal interactions "with an eye to their determination by, and their effects on, social structures" (36). To shed further light on the study of verbal dueling in Lebanon, we might ask a few questions suggested by Fairclough. In what ways is the practice of verbal dueling determined by social structures, and what effect does it have on them? In what ways is it socially shaped, but also socially



shaping, or constitutive? To what degree is language use in verbal dueling constitutive of social identities, social relations and systems of knowledge and belief? (Fairclough 131)

In verbal duels, poets representing a wide spectrum of Lebanese religious sects and political affiliations are able to safely and productively hash out current issues in public. Through these duels both poets and audience members are availed of an opportunity to hear multiple voices and opinions on a wide range of topics that matter to all of them in a profound way. At the same time, through the poets' attempts to prove their virtuosity and knowledgeability by recounting culturally significant stories and themes, they are able to solidify a common Lebanese identity and to forge unity among an extremely diverse population even as they pair off on opposite sides of an issue, and one that may initially seem as mundane as 'hot versus cold'.

During verbal duels, certain key concepts – the oppositions that form the opposing sides of debate, such as hot vs. cold or east vs. west – become open to reexamination and reformulation. In the hands of poets they can be reshaped and transformed like a ball of clay. Poets are allowed to change conventional symbolic associations in order to advance themselves and gain advantage over each other. At the same time, they have an understanding of where the line between witty insult and taboo is drawn and rarely do they cross that line. While it is acceptable to attack an opponent on a personal level, as Zaghoul did about Mousa's dark complexion, or even call him names like "stupid" or "fool," poets do not make attacks against the religious affiliation of their opponents. On the contrary, when they do use a religious symbol, which is quite often, it is always to show themselves as champions of all religions, not to attack each other or to attack a particular religion. While individual poets represent their particular religious groups, there are politeness conventions that prevent them from directly attacking each other along these lines. If a poet crosses this line, he will be rejected from the *zajal* community.

This was the case recently after an instance when the well-known Druze *zajal* poet, Tali<sup>c</sup> Hamdan (one of the members of Zaghoul's *jawqa* at Beit Mery) is said to have cursed the Virgin Mary. As a result, Tali<sup>c</sup> has become an outcast from the *zajal* arena, a *persona non grata* in many *zajal* circles<sup>308</sup>.

When it comes to the topic of Lebanon, certain important rules also seem to be at work. Poets can gain advantage by expressing their patriotism and devotion to Lebanon, or by associating themselves with traditional Lebanese symbols, such as the Cedar tree or Baalbek, Tyre, or Byblos, even *zajal* itself, which are stable. The concept that Lebanon is holy, sacred, graced by God with beauty and people who are steadfast and deeply rooted in its soil, is fixed. There is no room for debate on this issue. It is indeed a unifying factor. If there is any debate over Lebanon, it has to do with who can love Lebanon more or who can best protect Lebanon against foreign invasion or influence. Sometimes there are tense moments in a verbal duel, and the most common way to diffuse the tension is for poets to return to those unifying symbols around which they can all rally in support of Lebanon, beloved homeland.

While some topics are taboo, the spectrum of allowable topics for debate is broad. Poets are free to bring up a wide range of social and political topics in a *zajal* duel and to speak about these topics in an exceptionally free manner. This openness in the verbal duel is a reflection of the high value Lebanese society has always placed on free speech, something for which Lebanese journalists, writers, and political leaders, historically and to this day, have been willing to risk their lives and unfortunately sometimes lose them. And it is important to remember that

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<sup>308</sup> Poets Antoine Saadeh and Elias Khalil, for example, have mentioned in conversations with me the controversy surrounding Tali<sup>c</sup> Hamdan and described the strain on *jawqa* relations it has caused and how on a number of occasions, poets have refused to duel with him or to participate in events where he might be present.

the end of the duel involves a conscious stepping back from the sharp edge of debate and insult, and a celebration of the event as a communal/community spectacle. Zaghoul's final lines at the Battle of Beit Mery, which rise up like prayer, express this perfectly:

And now, facing his foe, each opponent    Salutes you, most cherished people of all  
Let this poetry stay exalted on high        May God keep you and keep eternal  
The cedars of Lebanon and the nights of *ma'annā*

### **What does the future hold for Lebanese *Zajal*?**

By definition, traditions are passed down from generation to generation. But traditions are not simply handed passively from experienced virtuosos to aspiring apprentices. The receivers of the tradition do not only preserve the tradition, they also do the life-giving work of shaping and transforming it as it makes its journey through decades and centuries and sometimes across seas and continents. What do today's *zajjāls* have in store for the future of Lebanese *zajal*? Are they doing what is necessary to keep their precious art form alive? Who are the young and up and coming poets? What kind of public support is out there for *zajal* poets and their art? From what I have witnessed, the future looks very bright. *Zajal* poets are busier than ever trying to fit requests for their performances into their schedules. Furthermore, there is growing recognition of the importance and value of their art in literary and academic circles.<sup>309</sup> In Lebanon *zajal* is beginning to claim its rightful place as a high form of art and in

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<sup>309</sup> The efforts of my home university (University of Arkansas) are a case in point, as it has sponsored Lebanese verbal duel events in Italy, three times in Lebanon -- including a highly successful and well-attended commemorative event at Beit Mery on the forty-first anniversary of the 1971 event -- and once at the University of Arkansas campus in Fayetteville, making history as the first time *zajal* poets have been invited to perform before a foreign academic audience while abroad. The UA's King Fahd Center for Middle East Studies has also supported scholarly research on Lebanese *zajal* by establishing and acquiring books, videos, and tapes for its special collection on oral poetry in the UA library.

2013 the Ministry of Education declared the need for its inclusion in public education. It is now being taught as part of the Arabic Literature curriculum at the Lebanese University as well as at several private universities in Lebanon. While I am not aware of other nearby Arab countries making this same move towards inclusion of “folk poetry” and other vernacular literary forms in mainstream curricula, I would not be surprised if Lebanon’s decision to do so paves the way and sets a trend around the Arab world. Oral forms in languages other than Arabic do seem to already enjoy a good level of acceptance as art worthy of scholarly attention. Major international conferences like the Vis Musicae conferences I have attended in Italy in 2009 and 2010, which brought together numerous poets and scholars from a variety of Mediterranean oral traditions, such as those found in Sicily, Sardinia, Mallorca, Menorca, Malta, the Canary Islands, Crete, Spain and Basque Country, are a case in point. As a result of the inclusion of Lebanese *zajal* poets and scholars at the Vis Musicae conferences, a special relationship developed between Lebanese and Basque poets. The Basque tradition of “Bertsolaritza” is a deeply-rooted and highly celebrated and cherished one which is not only offered in Basque mainstream curricula but is a required and institutionalized field of study in Basque schools from elementary through high school. Moreover, several Bertsolaritza competitions featuring the best Bertsolari poets by age group are organized and judged throughout the year, feeding into the major Bertsolaritza competition held in a massive stadium once every four years that is attended by 20,000 spectators and where the winning poet is crowned<sup>310</sup>. Plans are in the works for hosting a *Zajal*-

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<sup>310</sup> For more about the Bertsolaritza tradition, see the 2011 Txintxua Films documentary film by Basque filmmaker Asier Altuna. Also note the reference to Lebanese oral poetry in the film’s narrative. Also see *The Art of Bersolaritza: Improvised Basque Verse Singing* by Joxerra Garzia et. al.

Bertsolaritza festival in Lebanon or in Donostia-San Sebastian, Spain (the Basque capital) in coming years.

There are other important venues that support the art of *zajal* as well, such as the popular weekly TV show “Owf” (aired on Lebanese television station OTV) where young, aspiring poets can challenge themselves and each other before huge TV audiences and before high caliber judges such as show host Mousa Zoghayb himself. Programs like “Owf” help provide the all-important competitive impetus that fosters *zajal*’s advancement and the creativity and development of its practitioners. And OTV is not the only Lebanese station to air *zajal* on television. Public station Télé Liban has frequent airings of *jawqas* and of performances around Lebanon.

There is one major development in the field of *zajal* that I would like to end with, which is the entrance and increasing presence of young female *zajal* poets into the arena. This is not to say that women have not historically been a part of the *zajal* tradition, because there have been many accomplished and celebrated female *zajal* poets throughout its history. Several of these are included in the annals of *zajal* such as Joseph Abi Daher’s six volume encyclopedia, *Shu‘arā’ Zuraḡā’* (Charming Poets) or his *Antologia Zajal al-Ightirāb al-Lubnāni: 1900-2000* (Anthology of Lebanese *Zajal* in Immigrant Communities Abroad: 1900 - 2000). Women oral poets have always participated in public occasions calling for *zajal*, such as weddings, funerals, and holidays. Up until very recently, however, female *zajal* poets did not participate in the type of on-stage verbal dueling focused on in this study. One rising star that might be seen as a pioneer in the entrance of women onto the *zajal manbar* is Nagham Abi Karam, the recent winner of the top award on the TV show “Owf.” In an interview with Nohad Topalian for Al-Shorfa.com, Nagham spoke about having dueled with both male and female poets. In her duels

with men, especially, she tries to show women in a very positive light, drawing on the image of women “as mothers, giving individuals in society, and capable to take part in political life.” She addresses numerous themes, including women’s rights and other social issues such as poverty, hatred, violence and war, but most of all women’s issues dominate her *zajal* writings and recitals.

In the same interview, Nagham described having grown up in a “house full of poets” and having started writing *shurūqi* – a very difficult kind of *zajal* – at a young age<sup>311</sup>. Her father, poet Iskandar Abi Karam, and her aunt, poet Gulnar Abi Karam, encouraged her as a young girl to perform at Saturday evening poetry recitals at their family home and also by giving her specific topics to write *zajal* poems about. At age 16, she became the first woman in the Arab world to write in the *shurūqi* genre. Later, as a first-year university student at the Lebanese University, she took part in a poetry festival that included recitals in Lebanese dialect. Afterwards, she was encouraged by faculty and by the (female) Dean of the Faculty of Arts at the Lebanese University, prompting her to publish her first poetry collection, “Gulnar,” in honor of her aunt. In her final year at the university, while participating as she had done every year in the same annual poetry festival, Nagham describes how she ended up competing on OTV and embarked upon her life as a *zajal* celebrity:

*Zajal* poet Mousa Zoghayb and Dr. Claudia Abi Nader attended the festival. They had just finished presenting the first season of the *zajal* programme "Owf" on OTV and they were looking for participants for the second season. After listening to me, the poet

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<sup>311</sup> Described by Haydar in his as yet unpublished book manuscript on “The Metrics of Lebanese *Zajal*,” *shurūqi* was adapted by Lebanese *zajjāls* from the Bedouin prototype of the same name (143-44). It shares the basic Bedouin melody but is set to a different meter. It belongs to the *nathr* or free-rhythm musical form and is deemed a ‘difficult’ form due to its characteristic extensive melisma that punctuates each line. Mousa Zoghayb is known among *zajal* poets as a master of the *shurūqi* genre. For examples of *shurūqi*, see also Whaybeh (79-80).

Moussa Zoghayb asked if I wrote *shurūqi* and requested I join him on the show. I came out of the show with the first prize, the Golden Tambourine...

Fans and admirers opened a Facebook page for me called "The First Woman *Shurūqi* Pioneer". More importantly, the award motivated me to advance in this field. I am currently pursuing my master's degree, for which I chose the research topic "The Effect of Religion on Gulnar Abi Karam's Poetry", which includes a section on the types of *zajal* my aunt wrote, and a comparison to the Khalili meters [of classical Arabic poetry], which are the foundation of *zajal*. (Nagham 2)

For many reasons, it appears Lebanese *zajal* will continue to enjoy its prominent position in Lebanese society and will have a bright future. It is exciting to imagine the new developments in this highly valuable art form now that it is becoming accepted among the literary elite and now that women are taking on a larger role in its practice. It is beginning to find its way into more and more scholarly studies as well, including this dissertation, which is a first attempt to transcribe and translate an entire verbal duel into English and to make Lebanese *zajal* in general accessible to the English-speaking world. It is my hope that this study will set the stage for future research and will contribute to future studies on this extremely rich and powerful poetry tradition.

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## APPENDIX A: *Iftitāhiyyi* Segment

### *Iftitāhiyyi* of Mousa Zoghayb

### افتتاحية موسى زغيب

*Owf...Owf...* You and I are one, ask not  
 why sadness haunts my eyes  
 I was a threshing floor for those who came  
 to peck at me grain by grain  
 ‘Tis time to wean them now  
 from my generous breast  
 I used to stay up late, but the nights were shorter  
 than the dream that soothed my thoughts  
 What mother could spend long nights over a cradle  
 without buying wakefulness from my eyes  
*Owf...* I freed my thoughts on the wings of a dark-feathered eagle  
 and the wings lifted me higher and higher  
 Until the earth below me shrank, smaller, smaller  
 Than those who dared me to a duel  
*Owf...* I became more blasphemous than the guardians of fire  
 My madness drove the tempests mad  
 Niether Time nor the Fates drove me to blaspheme  
 Only the people of *ma‘annā* caused me to curse  
 I didn’t come here to gain fame in Zaghoul’s company  
 Crooning of harsh and tender dreams  
 I’ve come with my *jawqa* to crown the stage  
 And enter these honorable judges’ hearts  
 And let anyone who still doesn’t know me, know who I am

آوخ، آوخ، آوخ... أنا إنتو، أنا لا تسألوني لشو طلّ القسا بعقدة جفوني  
 فطمت جودي بعد ما كنت بيّدر  
 يجوا حبة وحبة ينقودوني  
 كنت إسهر وشوف الليل أقصر  
 من الحلم الـ عم يداعب ظنوني  
 وما قدرت عالسرير الإم تسهر  
 لو ما تشنري يقظة عيوني  
 طلقت فكري بجوانح نسر أسمر  
 صاروا يرفعوني ويرفعوني  
 حتى صرت شوف الأرض أزغر  
 من اللي عالّتحدي بيطلبوني  
 وصرت من حارسين النار أكفر  
 وجنّنت العواصف من جنوني  
 ما كفرنّي الزمان ولا المقدّر  
 فقط أهل المعنّى كفروني  
 وما جايي برفقة الزغول إكبر  
 عا أحلام القساوي والليوني  
 جايي بجوقتي توج المنبر  
 وخلي بقلب هاللجنة الكريمة  
 البعد ما بيعرفوني يعرفوني

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Poetry was once a seaport without a lighthouse  
 Gold buried in the crannies of a cave  
 Then Michel came along to sponsor this duel  
 To bring true lovers of *zajal* together, not to make a profit  
 Those who used to flee from us before  
 As if our cup was filled with enmity and bitterness  
 Have come here to make sure that *ma'annā* remains  
 A pure white dream in the eyes of virgins  
 And Zaghoul, if Death chooses to test us  
 We must face our fate with bravery  
 Perdition struck its blow on me long before you  
 And plucked from me that child, that pure lily blossom  
 The poet walks a path of wounds and daggers  
 With a smile on his lips and bitterness in his heart  
 Our *zajals* sang the epics of Palestine  
 Unmasking all the borrowed faces  
 And here in the name of *ma'annā* in our homeland  
 I have these words for the President and the Cabinet  
 If an emigrant finds fortune in the West  
 But has a feverish longing for his homeland  
 And you want to help him find his way back home  
 Send him a Poet in the name of Lebanon  
 You would be sending him the entire embassy

كان الشعر مينا بلا منارة  
 وذهب مدفون بزوايا المغارة  
 رجع "ميشال" هالحفلة تبنّى  
 لقا محبّين مش صفقة تجارة  
 والكانوا يهربوا بالأمس منّا  
 كأئو بكاسنا عدوى ومرارة  
 اجو يتأكّدوا إئو المعنى  
 حلم أبيض بعينين العذارى  
 يا زغلول لو الموت امتحنّا  
 ضرووري نقابل الدهر بجسارة  
 انا عليّ الفنا قبلك تجنّى  
 وخطّلي ابن زنبقة الطهارة  
 والشاعر دوم يمشي عالأسنة  
 عاتّم الضحك وبقلبو المّارة  
 زجلنا ملاجم فلسطين غنى  
 وكشف كلّ الوجوه المستعارة  
 والي باسم المعنى في وطنّا  
 عبارة للرئيس وللوزارة  
 اذا مهاجر بأرض الغرب جنّا  
 وإلو عا موطنو شوق وحرارة  
 اذا بدكن يرجع لعنّا  
 ودولو باسم لبنان شاعر

كأنكن عم تؤدولو سفارة

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Owf...Our *zajal* has reached the peak of its fame  
 Imposing itself in every situation  
 It set off into the world from its life imprisonment  
 So everyone could know what high standards it has  
 Bishop Qila'i, Lehfed's native son  
 Sang *zajal* and *zajal* crowned him with dignity  
 And Patriarch Aquri had great affection  
 For this sweet genre and blessed its fruits  
 And even Saint Ephrem's songs, in every place of worship  
 Became holy hymns of prayer  
 Emir Bashir gave us countless *zajal* poems  
 His ode to the mountain caused its rocks to rumble  
 And Nasif al-Yaziji, great composer of "al-Bahrayn,"  
 Was born with *ma'annā* pulsing through his veins  
 And Rashid Nakhleh composed the anthem to our cedars  
 Language itself rose like dough in his home  
 The only sources he cited were verses of *ma'annā*  
 He was its prince and lord and the bearer of its banner  
 And in those days Shahrour al-Wadi came  
 His wings from the skies of Bdadoun took flight  
 And King Farouk's eyes froze  
 When he heard Shahrour's *qaṣīd* so full of invention  
 He paved the road of poetry for our *jawqas*  
 So all could follow in his footsteps  
 And along came Rukuz that rebel on the stage  
 Waving his fiery sword of rebellion  
 And after nurturing and renewing *zajal*  
 And earning a wreath of laurels for his trustworthiness  
 He forged the path of verbal dueling with a heart colder  
 Than ice, just ask anyone who got caught in a contest

زجلنا اختلّ ذروة إزدهارو      وفرض عا كل موقف إعتبارو  
 انطلق عا الكون من سجنو المؤبد      تا يعطي الناس فكرة عن غيارو  
 المطران، القلاعي، ابن لخد      تغنى، والزجل جلل وقارو  
 والبطرك العاقوري تودد      لها اللون الحلو، وبارك ثمارو  
 وحتى مار افرام بكل معبد      أناشيدو صلا للدين صارو  
 و "المير بشير" بلازجال عدد      وقصيدو للجبل رجف حجارو  
 وناصيف اليازجي البحرّين أوجد      ربي بدمو المعنى وما استعارو  
 وابن نخلة نشيد الأرض أنشد      اللغة ربيت على خميرة ديارو  
 وإلا بالمعنى ما استشهد      أميرو وسيّدو ورافع شعارو  
 وعا إيّامو إجا الشحرور أسعد      جناحو من سما "بّدادون" طاروا  
 وعينين الملك فاروق جمّد      على كرة قصيدو وابتكارو  
 وطريق الشعر للجوقات عبّد      لحنى الكلّ يقتفيا آثارو  
 وإجا "روكز" على المنبر      تمرّد تمرّد سيف عم تلهب شفارو  
 وبعد ما طعم وطور وجدّد      ونال من الثقة إكليل غارو  
 افتتح درب التحدي بقلب أبرد      من التلج، اسألوا علقوا وتباروا

And ever since, his *jawqa* has remained a sturdy fortress, sturdier  
 Than the fortress Alexander failed to scale  
 When he frowned a night of darkness set in  
 Whose daylight never broke on these blind folks  
 Here I advise Zaghloul to stay away  
 And not risk tripling his defeat  
 And at this final meeting, with God as my witness  
 Which *jawqa* inside this monastery  
 Is going to raise the victory flag?

\*\*\*

Bear witness, storied citadel  
 To the might of the foursome of Khalil  
 And Zaghloul, it's not right to make false accusations  
 Like the ones you blared on the radio  
 You lived under my wing with abated emotions  
 And in my hands you were more pliant than my pen  
 But after you went away from me  
 Even the vipers cringed from your tongue  
 If it's victory you've come here to test me on  
 Know that I can prop triumphal arches on my elbows  
 Time kneaded into me so much experience  
 That the age of time and the length of my arm are one  
 Go ahead and sing, but what can you sing  
 When I'm the sea and you're a shell at the bottom of the sea  
 You live in constant fear of me  
 My ghost terrifies you when you're asleep  
 And mere mention of my name terrifies you when you're awake

\*\*\*

وبقي الجوق الخليلي حصن أصمد  
 من الحصن الكعي اسكندر حصارو  
 بقفلة حاجبو في ليل أسود  
 عا هالعميان ما بيطلع نهارو  
 وهوني بنصح الزغلول يبعد  
 أشرف ما يتألت إنكسارو  
 وبآخر متتقى الله بيشهد  
 بقلب الدبر أيا حوق منا  
 بدو يلوح بيرق إنتصارو

\*\*\*

اشهدي بالدبر يا اقدم قلاعي  
 عا سطوة جوق بوالخلّ الرباعي  
 يا زغلول ما بيسوى التجني  
 الظهر منك على البث الاذاعي  
 عشت حدي عواطف مستكني  
 وبايدي كنت اطوع من براعي  
 لكن من بعد ما بعدت عني  
 استحي من لسانك لسان الافاعي  
 اذا عالنصر جايي تمتحني  
 انا قواس النصر شقلة كواعي  
 وكتر ما الدهر بالخبرة عجنّي  
 انوصل عمر الزمان بطول باعي  
 وشو بدك تغني تا تغني  
 انا بحر وانت صدفة بقاعي  
 وصرت عايش عا هاجس رعب مني  
 طيفي بيرعبك لو كنت نايم  
 واسمي بيرعبك لو كنت واع

\*\*\*

*Owf...Owf...* I see a touch of sorrow there on your brow  
 My young years have begun to pity that gray hair of yours  
 Get your little lambs safe inside their pen  
 Before I loose my wolves on them  
 And for people to report that your *jawqa* dueled  
 With the *jawqa* that never misses its mark  
 You'll need to seek refuge from the Virgin of Virgins  
 And rebel against the clay of your being  
 From the volcano you'll need to borrow heat  
 And from the rocks you'll need to borrow hardness  
 From the two lions borrow some courage  
 And from the Sultan borrow some majesty  
 And from the knight borrow some skill  
 And in this citadel related to me by blood  
 If you were to put Time up on a saddle to launch an attack  
 Time wouldn't even come up to my knees  
*Owf...* You're a mere singer crooning with your *jawqa*-for-hire  
 One part is the chorus and the other plays the *rabāb*  
 If you're so enamored of your voice  
 Then go ahead with your "*Owf*" but let al-Basha  
 Set the tune for you and we will write the words

أوخ، أوخ، شفت عا جبهتك مسحة كآبي ابتدا عا شيبتك يشفق شبابي  
 احتجز حملانك بقلب العمارة قبل ما يفلتوا عليهن ديابي  
 وحتى يخبروا جوقك تبارى مع الجوق الما بيضيّع اصابي  
 بدك تلتجي لعنرا العذارى وتتمرد على الطين الترابي  
 ومن البركان تستقرض حرارة ومن الجلمود تستقرض صلابي  
 ومن السبعين تستقرض جسارة ومن السلطان تستقرض إهابي  
 ومن الخيال تستقرض مهارة وعا قلعة بينها وبينني قرابي  
 انسرجت الدهر حتى تشن غارة ببيقى الدهر اوطى من ركابي  
 أوخ، انت مطرب معك جوقه تجارة قسم كورس قسم يعزف ربابي  
 واذا معجب بصوتك عن جدارة عليك الاوف و"الباشا" الملحن  
 عليه اللحن وعلينا الكتابي

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

Cower before the sea you dried-up spring  
 Don't triple your disgraces one after another  
 All eyes are attentively watching us  
 The kings of the vernacular and the classical  
 In poetry you're nowhere near my caliber  
 And you don't belong in a real match like this  
 You're good for doing TV commercials  
 For Ninex and Bata and sweet-smelling soap  
 And after I pampered you plenty  
 And gave you a chance to flee  
 With what kind of heart, Zaghoul, are you coming here  
 To duel a poet with a tiger's heart and a tiger's pounce  
 And the rage of a wounded lioness in his eyes?

\*\*\*

And now, most beloved Abu Rukuz  
 To set your mind at ease, I send you a message  
 Be not afraid lest we lose the crown  
 The very lining of our crown is the star-studded night  
*Owf...* And as you told us to do when you left  
 We spent sleepless nights to reach the highest of heights  
 Sleep in bliss in the heart of the valley  
 And bask in the dreams of courage and valor  
 We've crossed the road and in our homeland will always be  
 The masters of the pen and improvised verse  
 And if they put the men of *ma'annā* through a sieve  
 The only poets who will remain  
 Are myself and Jiryis and Butrus and Faghali

\*\*\*

استحي من البحر يا نبعة شحيحة  
 ولا تتلّت فضيحة عا فضيحة  
 العين مفتحة علينا بعنايي  
 بملوك العاميّة والفصيحة  
 انت بالشعر مش من مستوايي  
 ولا خرج المباراة الصحيحة  
 انت بالتلفزة خرج الدعايي  
 للنينكس وباتا وصابون ريحة  
 وبعد ما كنت نههنتك كفايي  
 وعطيتك للهرب آخر نصيحة  
 بأيا قلب يا زغلول جايي  
 عا شاعر وثبة النمر بطموحو

وبعينو غصبة اللبوة الجريحة

\*\*\*

وهلق يا أبو روكز الغالي  
 على التطمين ببعثك رسالي  
 لا تقزع تا يروح التاج منا  
 بطانة تاجنا نجوم الليالي  
 ومثل ما حكيت لما غبت عنا  
 سهرنا تا وصلنا للعالِي  
 نام بفسحة الوادي تهنا  
 عا احلام البطولي والبسالي  
 قطعنا الدرب وبقينا بوطنا  
 اسياذ القلم والارتجالي  
 واذا بيتغربلوا رجال المعنى  
 من الشعار ما بيبضل إلا

انا وجريس وبطرس والفغالي

\*\*\*

*Iftitāhiyyi of Zaghoul al-Damour*

افتتاحية زغول الدامور

Owf...Owf...Forgive me, letters of the alphabet  
If I fall short of the task tonight  
I lost my brother who lavished his love on my children  
And on me, like a father and a mother  
He left us barely five hours ago  
Too soon for forgetting to set in  
After mourning my brother I came back to console my heart  
Because I consider each one of you  
A brother, now that my brother is gone

\*\*\*

آخ..اعذريني يا حروف الابجدية  
خسرت خيي المفضل عاولادي  
خمس ساعات صر لو مش زيادي  
بعزا خيي رجعت عزي فؤادي  
اذا ما بعمل الواجب علي  
وعلي، مثل امي ومثل بيبي  
ما حلّو بيتدي النسيان في  
لاني بعتر كل شخص منكن

بعد ما غاب خيي محل خيي

\*\*\*

276

Castle of Beit Mery, you can't forget this face  
I'm your native son and you know me well  
My father carried me, an infant, from the Shouf Mountains  
And showed me around in town after town  
I was born next door and climbed higher and higher  
I could see the sun lower than my brow  
And many a poet, flock after flock  
Passed like sheep to my left and my right  
And Castle of Beit Mery, were you to feed a thousand doses  
Of courage to those who dare enter my lair  
I would let my voice ring out from castle to castle  
Exploding like the bomb  
The Americans dropped on sad Hiroshima

\*\*\*

ويا قلعة بيت مري الما بتجهليني  
حملني والدي من الشوف خلعة  
خلقت بجديدتك وطلعت طلعة  
ومن الشعار كم شلعة بشلعة  
يا قلعة بيت مري لو الف بلعة  
تا خلي الصوت من قلعة لقلعة  
انا ابنك وانت بتعرفيني  
ونقلني من مديني عا مديني  
تا شفت الشمس اوطى من جبيني  
مشوا خواريف عا شمالي ويميني  
عطيتي للتحداني بعريني  
يدوي مثل قنبلة الفجرها  
الاميركاني بهيروشيما الحزيني

\*\*\*



And you, year of nineteen-seventy-one, you be  
 The judge between harshness and tenderness  
 Keep vigil with us over the deceased one's *jawqa*  
 Like a tender-hearted mother spending the night awake  
 And Mousa, after Mishrif brought us together  
 And we stocked you up with ten months of provisions  
 Now your cupboard is bare and here we are again  
 Call on me, orphans, and you'll find me  
 Eat 'til you're full, we filled up long before you  
 Wear us around your neck like icons on a chain  
 Go, reap the harvest of honor we planted for you  
 You're used to feeding on me in the dark of night  
 And denying me when the cock crows

\*\*\*

277 O lovers of *zajal* and creative genius  
 It's important you favor Mousa over me  
 Because he still has a steep hill to climb  
 Before reaching these heavenly heights  
 It's important you clap for him after each line  
 It's important he feels the majority on his side  
 It's important for his eyes to see the dawn  
 Morning prayers are better than those at night  
 I am waiting for the yeast of poetry to rise  
 I won't break the fast on a dainty bite  
 And if I get fed up with Moses over here  
 I'll bring Moses' mountain crashing down on Harajil  
 And finish him off before Jarring arrives

\*\*\*

ويا سنة الواحد وسبعين كوني  
 الحكم بين القساوي والليوني  
 اسهري عا جوقة المرحوم معنا  
 مثل ما بتسهر الأم الحنوني  
 ويا موسى بعد ما "المشرف" جمعنا  
 وعطيناكن عا عشر شهر موني  
 موني..الموني خلصت ونحنا رجعنا  
 اطلبوني يا يتامي بتواجدوني  
 اشبعوا نحنا قبل منكن شبعنا  
 البسونا بصدركن قوني وقوني  
 احصدوا نحنا كرامتكن زرعنا  
 اعتدتوا تاكلوني ليل اعمى  
 وعلى صياح الديوك بتتكروني

\*\*\*

ويا انصار الزجل والعبري  
 ضروري تناصروا موسى علي  
 لأنو بعد بدو كثير يطلع  
 تا يوصل عالسموات العلية  
 ضروري تزقفلو بكل مطلع  
 ضروري يشوف جنبو الاكثرية  
 صلاة الصبح افضل من عشية  
 انا ناظر خمير الشعر يطلع  
 ما رح بفطر على لقمة طرية  
 واذا خلقي على موسى بيطلع  
 تا اهدم طور موسى عا حراجل  
 وقبل يارينغ انهيلو القضية

\*\*\*

And what if at Mishrif with the final *qaṣīd*

Mousa got the last word, it's not a stretch to say  
That I let him have what was rightfully mine

And he blabbed the story according to his whims  
And at the end of the round there he was

Crawling around like a lonesome baby girl  
I squeezed out the blood of my compassion and gave him to  
drink

I realized the bullet was worth more than the prey  
*Owf... Owf..* Even though his oil was spilled he puffed himself up

Strutting about like a robin with wine-colored wings  
He started bragging before the children of his household  
Like a singer at harvest time

And to rid him of his vanity I invited him  
To this party, to this new battle

Bear witness, everyone, to the words I have spoken

And may my hands never touch the tambourine again  
If I don't make this conceited fool kiss my hand

\*\*\*

Luck has given you many gifts, Mousa

And even built you a house with four solid walls  
It was bad luck for you when that eagle and frontrunner died  
Who clothed you and your ilk when you were naked  
And it's lucky for you we didn't meet in another spot

Where shrapnel would clash with shrapnel  
It was your bad luck when all the bottles were emptied  
I found you at the bottom, a dreg among the dregs  
But I, when the homeland called on me  
To sing in the cities and villages

واذا بالمشرف بأخر قصيدي ختم موسى عليّ مش بعيدي

انا تنازلت عن حقّي وعطيتو وعاف ذوقو بلش يصف الجريدي

وعندما بأخر الجولة لقيتو عم يدبب مثل طفلة وحيدي

عصرت دماّت عاطفتي وسقيتو لقيت الضرب اعلّى من الطريدي

اوف.اوف.اوف..نفخ حالو عند ما انكب زيتو وشمخ بو الحن بجناحو النبيدي

وبدي يعرّم على اطفال بيتو مثل مطرب بايام الحصيدي

وتايخلّص من غرورو دعيّو عاهالحفلة، عاهالعركة الجديدي

اشهدوا عليّ وعاف هالحكي الحكيتو عاف ايدي تحرم دفوف المعنّى

اذا ما ببوّس المغرور ايدي

\*\*\*

يا موسى الحظ قدملك هدايا وبنا لك بيت عالاربع زوايا

نصيبك مات نسر الاولاني الكساكن عندما كنتوا عرايا

ونصيبك ما التقينا بجو ثاني تا تحتك الشظايا بالشظايا

ونصيبك بعدما فضيو القناني لقيتك من بقاياهن بقايا

انا لما الوطن كلو دعاني تا غنى بالمداين والقرايا

To honor my blonde beloved's request  
 I did not disappoint the young men and women  
 And long before jewels were born on my tongue  
 I donned the mantel of tender zaghoul doves  
 And if I were to shake my feathers between cedars and oaks  
 You could build a grand palace with their dust  
 I gave to poetry deep meanings from my own soul  
 In gratitude Lebanon cried, "What wonderful gifts are these!"  
 And if I were to record a record album  
 It would turn deaf stone into a thousand mirrors  
 I am Joseph, the one God has chosen  
 To raise the one who washed away sin with his blood  
 And if Moses your namesake stepped into the present  
 I'd swipe that stone tablet right out of his hands  
 O Zayn Sh<sup>c</sup>ayb, sturdy foundation and cornerstone  
 And you, son of Hamdan, hawk of death  
 And you, Harb, storehouse of treasures  
 Don't bother to analyze matters too much  
 I alone, were I to saddle my horse  
 With that saddle I'd tie up all four of their mounts  
 And the *jawqa* of Mousa the Keserwani  
 Who rode in in the evening as four shining knights  
 Will go home in the morning four victims of my slaughter

كرامة عين ولفي الاشقر اني  
 وقبل ما الدر يخلق عن لساني  
 ورياشي بين ارزة وسندياني  
 عطيت الشعر من روعي معاني  
 واذا سجّلت هوني اسطواني  
 انا يوسف انا الله اصطفاني  
 واذا موسى سميتك عا زماني  
 ويا زين شعيب، يا ركن المباني  
 وانت يا حرب، يا خزنة ملاني  
 انا وحدي اذا بسرج حصاني  
 وعناصر جوق موسى الكسرواني  
 وعابكرا بيرجعوا اربع ضحايا

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

## APPENDIX B: Verbal Duel and Closing *Qaṣīds* – Zaghloul al-Damour vs. Mousa Zoghayb

**Zaghloul:**

What ails the stars, are they falling asleep?  
Time to bring brilliance back into their eyes  
Tell your fortress, O monastery, we're ready for battle  
Each one of our chests as vast as infinity  
At Mishrif, Mousa wasted time doting on himself  
My lion's eyes took pity on that doe  
But today, Mousa, when calamity runs its course  
You'll find the opposite of your heart's desire  
Our decisive battle will not end  
'Til I shred your soul and finish you off  
*'Til I shred your soul and finish you off*  
*'Til I shred your soul and finish you off*

**Mousa:**

Owf! Be proud, Beit Mery, light up the dark  
The nights again crown kings within your walls  
Zaghloul, forget the dawn of your future, scratch it out  
The decisive sword will sever your limbs  
At Mishrif, he who made you weep at your own doorstep  
Didn't lure you here to pamper you  
Yours truly is a fortress and I've trod the path to this one  
We are two fortresses now, challenging the stars  
So go ahead and choose one of the two  
And bash your head on whichever you like

*And bash your head on whichever you like*  
*And bash your head on whichever you like*

**ز غلول:**

نعست نجوم الليل مدري شو بها هلق رح نرجع لعينيهها البها  
يا دير قول لقلعتك نحنا لها وكل صدر منا قد صدر المنتهى  
بحفلة المشرف بالدلع موسى التهى وشفت عيون السبع عا عيون المهى  
واليوم يا موسى اذا الداهي دها بدك تلاقي بعكس ما القلب اشتهى  
مش رح منهي معركتنا الفاصلي تا شوف روحك فاصلي وكل شي انتهى  
تا شوف روحك فاصلي وكل شي انتهى  
تا شوف روحك فاصلي وكل شي انتهى

**موسى:**

آخ. اعتزي يا قلعة بيت مري وضوي الحلك رجعوا اللبالي يتوجوا فيكي الملك  
ز غلول شطب عا فجر مستقبلك هالفاصلة سيف الفصل عامفصاك  
البكاك بالمشرف عا عتبة منزلك ما استدرجك عالدير حتى يدلك  
داعيك قلعة ودرب هالقلعة سلك صرنا قلاع تنين نتحدى الفلك  
وما ضل غير تختار قلعة من التنين وتندق راسك مطرح الاهون الك

وتندق راسك مطرح الاهون الك  
وتندق راسك مطرح الاهون الك

## ز غلول:

المشرف يا موسى كان الي فيها صدی وضيفي انت كنت وانا لضيفي فدا  
بتقدر عا بيتي تزورني اليوم وغدا      بعملك من القلب ترويقة وغدا  
لكن بقلعة بيت مري سهام الردی      بدها تصيبك قد ما يطول المدى  
دقيت عالقلعة وقلت وين العدی      سكنت ووفقت من فز عها عا حده  
ورجعت لما الخوف عالقلعة بدا      دقيت فيك وراحت الدقة سدى  
وسمعت من راسك صدی جابوب وقال      فلأوا اللي كانوا هون مش باقي حدا  
فلأوا اللي كانوا هون مش باقي حدا  
فلأوا اللي كانوا هون مش باقي حدا

## موسى:

آخ...يا مشرف الكنتي بشعري معجبي      كنت الاله لشعرك وكنت النبي  
دقيت راسك في دروع مكهربی      ووعيت وحصدت النتيجة المرعبي  
راسي وام الدهر اخوه ياغبی      جابوا البرق والرعد والليل الابي  
والبطش وصمود الشفار الطيبي      وريح العواصف والعقل والموهبي  
وتا تشوف وين راحوا بدقة مسرسي      احتك البرق والرعد بالليل العبي  
والبطش يصرخ يا رياح تأهبي      والموهبة راحت تغذي المكتبي

## Zaghloul:

Mousa, at Mishrif my fame still resounds  
You were my guest and for a guest I sacrifice all  
You can visit me at my home any day you wish  
You can eat my own heart for breakfast and lunch  
But here in Beit Mery the arrows of death  
Will pierce you 'til the end of time  
I knocked on the fortress. Where are the enemies? I asked  
It froze in fright finding itself alone  
When fear appeared on the fortress I went back  
And knocked on you, but knocking was in vain  
An echo rang out from your head that said  
There's nobody here, they've all gone away  
*There's nobody here, they've all gone away*  
*There's nobody here, they've all gone away*

## Mousa:

Owf...O Mishrif, you who adored my poetry  
Remember, I was the god of your poetry and its prophet  
Zaghloul, you bashed your head on an electric shield  
And woke up reaping the scary results  
My head and the mother of endless time are siblings, you fool!  
We brought you lightning, thunder, and the prideful night  
And violence and long-lasting sharp blades  
We brought you the gusts of tempests, brains and talent  
And to see where they went with a worried clang  
Lightning and thunder blasted through the thick night  
Violence shouted, "Winds, prepare for battle!"  
And talent sped off to nourish the library

Before the duel, steadfastness lay hiding  
 Then surprised the world with a rebellion of flames  
 Only brains stayed behind to lay a snare for you  
 And finish you off with one last blow  
*And finish you off with one last blow*  
*And finish you off with one last blow*

### Zaghloul:

Mousa fell in the trap and his buddies were erased  
 A pity how they swayed and looked like fools  
 Mousa fell in the trap and his buddies were erased  
 A pity how they teetered and swayed  
 You think you can restrain the eagle and grab his wings?  
 You can barely spy him out with binoculars!  
 Your analysis puts a strain on any brain  
 People are tired of you, Mousa, and embarrassed, too  
 If you keep on adding and subtracting like that  
 You'll force me to open your record for all to see  
 Leave the libraries alone; let them enjoy our books  
 Those who put their faith in your talents got nowhere  
 Arm yourself with inspiring thoughts  
 The war of *zajal* is not won with little traps  
 Someone with a sound mind in its place  
 Shouldn't put traps 'round himself, I say  
 But you, on purpose you set up the trap  
 To stop us from prying and exposing you  
*To stop us from prying and exposing you*  
*To stop us from prying and exposing you*

وراح الصمود قبل التحدي يختبي  
 ويفاجئ العالم بثورة لاهبي  
 وما ضل غير العقل ناصبك شرك  
 تا ينتهي منك بأخر تجريبي  
 تا ينتهي منك بأخر تجريبي  
 تا ينتهي منك بأخر تجريبي

### ز غلول:

موسى وقع بالفخ ورفاقو انمحو  
 يا ويلهن شو تمرجحوا وشو تشرشحوا  
 موسى وقع بالفخ ورفاقو انمحو  
 يا ويلهن شو تطوطحوا وشو تمرجحوا  
 يا قاصد تهدي النسر بجوانحو  
 بالكاد بالناصور تقدر تلمحو  
 بها الشرح يللي عا العقل عم تشرحو  
 تعبوا يا موسى الناس عنك واستحو  
 انضليت تجمع هالحساب وتطرحو  
 بضطر للعالم سجلك افتحو  
 اللي توكلوا عاموا هيك ما استفتحو  
 وعود افكارك بالوحي يتسلحو  
 بنصب الشرك حرب الزجل ما بتربحو  
 البيكون عندو عقل صاغ بمطرحو  
 تا يحط من حولو الشرك ما بنصحو  
 لكن انت عن قصد حظيت الشرك  
 احلى ما نوصل للمخبى ونفضحو  
 احلى ما نوصل للمخبى ونفضحو  
 احلى ما نوصل للمخبى ونفضحو

**Mousa:**

Zaghloul, don't let my kindness deceive you  
 Like the hissing of serpents before they attack  
 Even if Jupiter came to your aid  
 You'd still be cowering in the shade of my stage  
 I will not reign in the great gem of a mind  
 That stores in its depths Ma<sup>c</sup>arrī, Bin Burd, and Buḥturī  
 And Sartre, Nietzsche, and that genius Shakespeare  
 And the ants of *ma<sup>c</sup>annā* procuring provisions at my threshing  
 floors  
 I've built a fortress 'round my mind to withstand an attack  
 Not for fear of Zaghloul with his tender beak  
 You want to see what's in store for you?  
 Your first surprise is a violent, barbaric death  
 Next some lacerations from Antar's sword  
 And a decree of death straight from Caesar's palace  
 So that finally after history's heroes and all their blood  
 I'll cleanse this castle with a little bird's tears  
*I'll cleanse this castle with a little bird's tears*  
*I'll cleanse this castle with a little bird's tears*

**Zaghloul:**

Let your volcanoes erupt, Equator  
 And draw the line between ripe and unripe  
 That bird you mentioned, his proverbial deeds dot the annals of  
 Time  
 This whole fortress will tremble and quake at the sound of his  
 voice  
 And were you to brandish Hannibal's unbending sword

**موسى:**

اوخ... زغلول لا تغرك نعومة مظهري هي حكمة الحية اللي بدھا تفترى  
 ان شدك مغنطيس المشتري بتضل تتقيا بكرسة منبري  
 وما بسيج على عقل شاعر جوهرى فيه المعري وبن برد والبحترى  
 وسارتر وننتشي وشكسبير العبرى ونمل المعنى مونتو عن بيدري  
 حصنت عقلي من الهجوم العسكرى مش خوف من زغلول منقادو طري  
 وتا تشوف شو مخبي الك من مصدري مخبيك الموت العنيف البربرى  
 مخبيك جروح الحسام العنتري وحكم اعدام البلاط القيصري  
 حتى بعد دلمات ابطال الزمان غسل بدمع الطير قلعة بيت مري  
 غسل بدمع الطير قلعة بيت مري  
 غسل بدمع الطير قلعة بيت مري

**زغلول:**

فجر براكينك يا خط الاستوا ونقي اللي بعدو فج من يلي استوى  
 الطير القصدتو الدهر عن فعلو روى وببزلزل القلعة اذا صوتو دوى  
 ولوجبت شفرة سيف هاني الما التوى وسحبة عصا موسى وحنش وادي طوى  
 ودرع النبي داوود هال كلو قوى وعصفا هوا الأصفر ال ما الها دوا

Or unsheathe Moses' staff and the serpent of Tuwa  
 And King David's armor with all its might  
 And a fatal whiff of that plague-laden wind  
 And an army of giant jinns, each battalion a brigade  
 And a net to save you from death and dangerous winds  
 I won't let you go 'til I bring down this castle onto your head  
 And bury you and grind your bones with your flesh  
*And bury you and grind your bones with your flesh*  
*And bury you and grind your bones with your flesh*

### Mousa:

Owf...Zaghloul delved deep to choose his metaphors  
 The judges will regret their long trip here  
 The more potent a wine is  
 The more valuable to its vintners  
 Let go, release poetry's eagles from their nests  
 Until the winds blind the planet with their dust  
 We brought Moses's staff and all its hidden magic  
 And King David's verses and his lyre  
 And this fortress whose stones my feathers have brushed  
 Mousa is its king, its glory, and its motto  
 In charge of its stances and protector of its grounds  
 His chest a plate of armor culled from its stones  
 But you, sir, are a bird of bad omen come to visit  
 And it would suit you, bird, to have such a chance  
 Have the king die and this castle in ruins  
 So you could dance on the rubble to your heart's delight

*So you could dance on the rubble to your heart's delight*  
*So you could dance on the rubble to your heart's delight*

وعسكر مروود الجن كل فوج بلوا وشبكة ترد الموت عنك والهوا  
 مش تاركك تا اهدم القلعة عليك وطمك واخلط عضمك ولحمك سو  
 وطمك واخلط عضمك ولحمك سو  
 وطمك واخلط عضمك ولحمك سو

### موسى:

أخ...ز غلول عمق والمعاني اختارها رح تأسف اللجنة على مشوارها  
 الخمرة اذا بيتقل كثير عيارها بتزيد قيمتها بنظر خمارها  
 فيلت نسور الشعر من اوكارها تا الريح تعمي الكوكب من غبارها  
 جبنا عصا موسى وسحر اسرارها ايات داوود النبي ومزمارها  
 وهالقلعة الريشي نتر عاججارها موسى ملكها وعزها وشعارها  
 وسيد موافقها وحامي ديارها وصدره درع مقدود من اسوارها  
 لكن جنابك طير شؤم وزارها وبيناسبك يا طير نيل جوارها  
 تا يموت الملك وتصير هالقلعة خراب تا تضل ترقص عا زوايا عمارها

تا تضل ترقص عا زوايا عمارها

تا تضل ترقص عا زوايا عمارها



**Zaghloul:**

Not everyone who climbed high on the stage  
 Deserves to be called a poet of prestige  
 O morning stars, come down to this duel  
 Before I make the earth start to tremble and shake  
 O morning stars, come down to this duel  
 Before I make the earth start to tremble and shake  
 The judges who came to this packed fort  
 Came to carry your coffin when the duel is done  
 We are the cooing doves of poetry  
 What a shame to waste our time on vultures like these  
 Go disappear, let truth shine forth  
 Leave me to dance and prance and strut about  
 From beginning to end, King of the house of decay  
 You've been sitting on a broken, worn-out chair  
 At the end of this duel, your prize will be death  
 And dancing and howling will be mine  
*And dancing and howling will be mine*  
*And dancing and howling will be mine*

**Mousa:**

Owf...Flutter, O wings of insight, and swoop down  
 Lift Mousa Zoghayb to a wider world  
 Rest assured, Khalil, the eagle you left to guard the fortress  
 Has forbidden the baby chicks of *zajal* to climb the stage  
 Zaghloul, don't pretend not to know your master and king  
 Get down on your knees and beg his command

**ز غلول:**

مش كل من عا كرسة المنبر علي صار ينسمى شاعر رفيع المنزلي  
 يا نجوم وج الصبح عالحفة انزلي من قبل ما بالارض اعمل زلزلي  
 يا نجوم وج الصبح عالارض انزلي من قبل ما بالارض اعمل زلزلي  
 اللجنة الـ إجت عا دير قلعة مبكلي تا يحملوا بنعشك بأخر مرحلي  
 نحنا ز غاليل الشعر والترغلي وعاهيك نوع نسور شو هالبهلي  
 روح اختقي خلي الحقيقة تنجلي اتركني انا ارقص وامشي حنجلي  
 اول عا آخر يا ملك دار البلي الجالس عا كرسة متختخة ومهللي  
 رح تطلع الموتة بهالحفة إلك والزلغطة والرقص والدبكة إلي  
 والزلغطة والرقص والدبكة إلي  
 والزلغطة والرقص والدبكة إلي

**موسى:**

اوخ... يا جوانح الالهام رفوا وانزلوا قيموا الزغبيي لكون ارحب وانقلوا  
 النسر التركتو يا خليل بمعقلو حرّم جلابيط المنابر يعتلوا  
 ز غلول مولاك الملك ما بتجهلو اركعلو وشو بيريد منك اسألو

Were the king to die, his name would stay high  
 Terrifying and squeezing you through his sieve  
 Gather your little friends the day of my burial and dance  
 Do a dabke, serve wine and dessert to the guests  
 But no matter how much you howl and rejoice  
 I will not allow you to savor the joy  
 Just like the Jews howling at the burial of Christ  
 Who bowed down in worship the day he rose  
*Who bowed down in worship the day he rose*  
*Who bowed down in worship the day he rose*

### Zaghloul:

Son of Mary, rise and tell your deputy  
 To cast out your enemy from the ranks of your loved ones  
 God help you, Zoghayb, with all your troubles  
 Who do you think you are, telling us kneel?  
 You think you're Jesus Christ? What's gotten into you?  
 You're no Christ and haven't worked any miracle  
 You're not even Moses, you're the one-eyed Moshe!  
 The Antichrist is your brother and the Jews are your cousins!  
*The Antichrist is your brother and the Jews are your cousins!*  
*The Antichrist is your brother and the Jews are your cousins!*

### Mousa:

Owf...Zaghloul, I gave you words of marble. Go get some sleep  
 Or bring the same kind of quarry and the same kind of marble  
 To get attention, you beg for help from a one-eyed man  
 This hurts the feelings of all Arabs everywhere  
 Let me now bolster my argument with harmony and zeal  
 The name Mousa has no dots, like the word "endurance"

وان مات الملك يضل اسمو بمنزلو      يرعبك وينزلك من منخلو  
 جمع شبابك يوم دفني واعملوا      دبكة ورقص وضيفوا خمر وحلو  
 بس مهما تزلغطوا وتهللوا      مش رح بخليكن الفرحة تكملوا  
 مثل اليهود الزلغطوا بدفن المسيح      ورجعوا بيوم قيامتو سجدوا إلو  
 ورجعوا بيوم قيامتو سجدوا إلو  
 ورجعوا بيوم قيامتو سجدوا إلو

### ز غلول:

يا ابن مريم قوم قلو لنايبك      يبعد عدوك عن صفوف حبايبك  
 يا ز غيب الله يساعذك عا مصايبك      جايي ترگعنا ومين الجاييك  
 شبهت حالك بالمسيح شو صايبك      لئك مسيح ولا ظهرت عجايبك  
 ولا انت موسى، انت "موشى" بفرد عين الدجال خيک واليهود قرايبك  
 الدجال خيک واليهود قرايبك  
 الدجال خيک واليهود قرايبك

### موسى:

اوخ... عطيتك رخام وروح يا ز غلول نام او جيب ذات المقلع وذات الرخام  
 بتستنجد بأعور تا تحصى باهتمام عم تجرح شعور العروبة بوجه عام  
 وتا ادعم الفكرة بحجة وانسجام اسم موسى بلا نقط مثل الدوام

Like “sky” and “God” and “peace”  
 Like “good luck” and “promise” and straight “arrows”  
 And what business is it of yours, little Pigeon?  
 To dot my letters, and turn me into Mousha for rebuke  
 For revenge I will pluck out your eyes  
 And add the eye of Moshe you alluded to before  
 And put them as three decorative dots  
 And turn my name into “Mousha”, not to puff myself up  
 But to forbid that one who can’t make good rhymes  
 From dotting peoples’ names and changing their words

*From dotting peoples’ names and changing their words*  
*From dotting peoples’ names and changing their words*

مثل السما مثل الآله مثل السلام      مثل السعد مثل الوعد مثل السهام  
 وشو خصك باسمي يا زغول الحمام      تا تنقطو ويصير موشى للملام  
 رح جيب عينيك التنين بانتقام      وعين موشى البعدها مسك الختام  
 وحطن ثلاث نقطات عازينة علام      تا يصير موشى مش تا اكبر بالمقام  
 تا حرم البتضييق عندو القافيي      ينقط حروف الناس ويغير كلام

ينقط حروف الناس ويغير كلام

ينقط حروف الناس ويغير كلام

### زغول:

يا جوائح الزغول ضلّك في أمان      ريشك من الأرز وشلوح السنديان  
 عا بيت مري شو جيت تعمل يا فلان      ما عرفت من رقة قصيدي الصخر لان  
 وبالقافية والوزن وحروف البيان      بغير وما بخلي عا هالبيدر زوان  
 ورح ضل حط وشيل فيك بهالزمان      وعبي الفاضي بعينك وفضي الملاان  
 بيجوز قلبك ازرعو محل اللسان      وبيجوز راسك اوضعو بتاني مكان  
 وبضغط عليك وبعصر ك بالكشتبان      وبتلات نقط دمك منهي المهرجان  
 ومن هالنقط رح نحط نقطة باليابان      ونقطة بقلب جهنم الحمرا كمان

### Zaghloul:

Have no fear, wings of the baby dove  
 Your feathers are culled from the cedars and the oaks  
 What did you come to Beit Meri for, Mr. What’s-Your-Name?  
 Don’t you know my fine odes soften the hardest of rocks?  
 And as for my rhyme and meter and eloquent words  
 I change them and mix them and leave no chaff on the floor  
 I’ll keep pouring it on you and emptying you out  
 I’ll fill in the empty space in your eyes and empty what is full  
 Perhaps I’ll plant your heart where your tongue ought to be  
 And perhaps I’ll put your head where that other thing is  
 I’ll squeeze you and squish ‘til you fit in a thimble  
 And with three drops of your blood we will end the fair  
 We’ll take one of those drops and put it in Japan  
 And another one in the smoldering heart of hell

That will leave one drop of you in Beit Mery  
So people can point and say, "Mousha" Zoghayb was here

*And people can point and say, "Mousha" Zoghayb was here*  
*And people can point and say, "Mousha" Zoghayb was here*

### Mousa:

Owf...Pack up your wings and leave, Zaghloul  
Don't suffer Zoghayb's arrows and slings  
Pack up your wings and leave, Zaghloul  
Don't suffer this night's arrows and slings  
You should beg to go home to your house instead  
Not suffer the tyranny of Zoghayb and beg for help from God  
Squeeze a great hero into a thimble? That is but an illusion  
I have no time for these magic tricks and abracadabra of yours  
If this stage wants my blood, it is welcome to it  
A saint isn't stymied by the demands of prayer  
Your picture went 'round, a letter from *so-and-so* to *so-and-so*  
Like a cheap official stamp in times of boon and bounty  
And if three drops of my blood have spilled  
They symbolize to the world what's in the heart of man  
The first drop is that of the war hero splattered upon  
The flag, soaking it red and rending the skies  
The second is the blood of Christ upon the cross  
And the third, the blood of al-Husayn in Karbala

*And the third, the blood of al-Husayn in Karbala*  
*And the third, the blood of al-Husayn in Karbala*

وما يضل منك غير نقطة ببيت مري حتى يقولوا هون موشى ز غيب كان

حتى يقولوا هون موشى ز غيب كان

حتى يقولوا هون موشى ز غيب كان

### موسى:

أوخ...ز غلول ضب جناحك وارحل بلا ما تحمل من الزغيب آلام وبلا  
ز غلول ضب جناحك وارحل بلا ما تحمل بهالليل آلام وبلا  
واصرخ يا محلا البيت والرجعة ولا تصرخ عابطش ز غيب لا حول ولا  
بتعصر بطل بالكشتبان وهم انطلى مش وقت لعب كشابتينك و "الجالا"  
المنبر اذا بيريد دمي يا هلا ما ما بيحرج القديس مطلوب الصلا  
ورسمك توزع عالبر من والى طابع اميري البخل بسنين الغلا  
ولولا ثلاث نقاط من دمي سلا هودي رمز الدني بنفوس الملا  
الاولي دم البطل طرطش على البيرق لحتى تحمر وشق الفلا  
والثانية دم المسيح على الصليب والثالثة دم الحسين بكر بلا  
والثالثة دم الحسين بكر بلا

والثالثة دم الحسين بكر بلا

### Zaghloul:

You're suffering from a blood-clot, these drops are serious  
Into my hands you have fallen, and that is no joke  
That flag drenched red with martyr's blood  
Your black blood does no honor  
And Husayn's precious blood, shed in Karbala  
Great men bow their heads before his glory  
And the blood that saved the people of the bell and minaret  
Was not shed for Mousa of Khaybar and his lowly actions  
The three drops of your blood in that sad hour  
Led you to a fig tree and to a noose  
Those drops were the blood money for betraying Christ  
They splattered on your palm, each drop to a different world  
*They splattered on your palm, each drop to a different world*  
*They splattered on your palm, each drop to a different world*

### Mousa:

Owf...Before the money, the blood on my wounded palm  
Turned into new commandments; read them with care!  
First commandment: Let the real jawqa  
Lift our zajal to the eloquent heights  
The second: Any rooster who can't crow right  
Must suffer here the butcher's knife  
The third: Beware of standing before a hurricane  
And the fourth, if you break this one, you'll never rest  
The fifth and the sixth: Avoid all ugliness  
And the seventh and eighth: Give comfort to the crippled

### ز غلول:

يا واقع بنقطة النقط مش هيني      بايدي علقت عن جد مش عن ولدني  
الراية البدمات الشهيد ملوني      عن دمك الاسود كرامتها بغني  
ودم الحسين بكر بلا الدم الغني      رقبة الشمر قبال مجدو بتتحني  
ودم الفدى شعب الجرس والميدني      منو لموسى الخيري وفعلو الدني  
وتلات نقط دمك بساعة محزني      ودوك عاتينة وعامرسة مصوبني  
هودي المصاري اللي قبضتن عالمسيح      انطرشوا عا كفك كل نقطة في دني  
انطرشوا عا كفك كل نقطة في دني  
انطرشوا عا كفك كل نقطة في دني

### موسى:

أوخ...قبل المصاري الدم عا كفي الجريح      تحول وصايا جداد اقراهن مليح  
اول وصية لازم الجوق الصحيح      يرفع زجل لبنان لمقام الفصيح  
والثانية كل ديك ما بيعرف يصيح      بهالدير يمرق تحت سكين الدبيح  
والثالثة اصحا الوقوف بوجه ريح      والرابعة انخالفتها ما بتستريح  
والخامسة والسادسة تحاشى القبيح      والسابعة والثامنة عين الكسيح

The ninth: Muzzle the vipers, stop their hissing  
 And the tenth: Don't deceive yourself with excessive praise  
 This is how Moses in the past was blunt  
 Flooding with his commandments the spacious universe  
 That was long before the law, the messengers, and the prophets  
 And long before you and profiteers of Christ's blood

*And long before you and profiteers of Christ's blood  
 And long before you and profiteers of Christ's blood*

### Zaghloul:

Stars of the skies, it's your right to be mad and burn in anger  
 Hearing all this nonsense from Mousa and his people  
 What is your problem, Mousa? Why don't you understand?  
 I address you here and you answer in Abu Dhabi  
 A moment ago you were the master of the trade  
 All puffed up and crowing like a rooster on the rooftop  
 What've your tambourine and palm got to do with me, you fool?  
 Go ask some gypsy fortune-teller to read your palm for you  
 We've had our fill of your evasiveness, O talentless one  
 Settle on one thing, quit doing cartwheels and clowning around  
 So far I've heard you claim you're the grandson of the Prophet  
 And that you're Jesus Christ, raised in his mother's embrace  
 And when you started feeling your life was a failure  
 You turned to that foreigner Moses for help  
 The Savior of Christians and the Messenger to the Arabs  
 Leave those two to the men of turbans and robes  
 Go get me the staff from your buddy Moses  
 So I can smack you over the head, little boy

*So I can smack you over the head, little boy  
 So I can smack you over the head, little boy*

والتاسعة كم الافاعي من الفحيح والعاشرة لا تغر نفسك بالمديح  
 وهيك موسى كان بالماضي صريح وذا الوصايا تغمر الكون الفسيح  
 قبل الشرايع والرسل والانبيا وقبلك وقبل التاجروا بدم المسيح

وقبلك وقبل التاجروا بدم المسيح

وقبلك وقبل التاجروا بدم المسيح

ز غلول:

أوف. حَقَّكَ يا نجمات السما تتكهربي وعاخبار موسى وشعب موسى تغضبي  
 شو باك مش فاهم شو قصدي ومطلبي بحاكك هون وعم ترد ببو ضبي  
 هَلَّق كنت عامل ز عيم المرتبي معرم مثل شي ديك فوق المصطبي  
 شو خصني بدفك وكفك يا غبي روح شوف بختك مع منجم مغربي  
 شعبنا تهرب يا عديم الموهبي اثبتلك على شي اسم حاجي شقلبي  
 بعلمي عملت حالك ابن بنت النبي وعيسى المسيح العا حضن امو ربي  
 ولما شعرت صارت حياتك متعبي بلشت تستنجد بموسى الاجنبي  
 فادي النصارى والرسول اليعربي اتركهن لاصحاب العمائم والعبي  
 وجيب العصاية العند موسى صاحبك تا اليوم كسرها عا راسك يا صبي

تا اليوم كسرها عا راسك يا صبي

تا اليوم كسرها عا راسك يا صبي

موسى:

آخ.يا جايعين.يا جايعين تجمّعوا بهالمملكي باب الزغبي باب جعفر برمكي  
وجو الادب والشعر غير المعركي ذكر العصا عيب وسخافة ومضحكي  
الانسان مجدو في كلامو الما شكي مش بالعصا البدو عليها يتكي  
وأعلى الحكي قرآن أحمد لو حكي وانجيل عيسى والوصايا مشاركي  
عطيتك وصايا مقدسة ومباركي ما قبلتها والشرع لو منها بكي  
يا لجنة التحكيم ابكي واضحكي رح موت من انسان متحدي الذكي  
رد الوصايا وصار يسأل عالصا ولا بالعصا رح يفهم ولا بالحكي  
ولا بالعصا رح يفهم ولا بالحكي  
ولا بالعصا رح يفهم ولا بالحكي

Mousa:

Come into my kingdom, all ye who hunger  
To the realm of Zoghayb, of Jafar Barmaki  
To the realm of literature and poetry, not the battlefield  
Your talk of the staff is shameful, dim-witted, and laughable!  
Man's glory is in his well-chosen words  
Not in the staff he needs to lean on  
The most cherished talk is Muhammad's Quran when it speaks  
And the gospel of Jesus and the Ten Commandments  
I gave you commandments holy and blessed  
You turned them down though religious law would've heard  
them and cried  
Dear judging panel, go ahead, laugh and cry  
I am sick to death of this one challenging my intelligence  
He rejected the commandments and asked for the staff  
But nothing can make Zaghoul understand, not the staff  
and not the words!  
  
*But nothing can make Zaghoul understand, not the staff and not  
the words!*  
*But nothing can make Zaghoul understand, not the staff and not  
the words!*

### Zaghloul:

Find your way to my threshing floors, Judging Panel  
See all the boon and bounty pouring forth  
If I were talking to some vagabond  
Or some garrulous chatterbox  
Or some madman who's lost his marbles  
Or some statue on display in a tinsmith's museum  
Or some deaf man with no idea of what's happening around him  
Or a mute whose tongue can't be fixed with glue  
I'd understand from such a barbaric fool  
Much more than I'm getting in Beit Mery from you!  
Your words make no sense to anyone, nor are they fresh  
I don't want your name inscribed in my book  
Between the commandments, the staff and all the buying and  
selling  
When I found you making a travesty of poetry  
I left the commandments and opened my storehouse of  
knowledge  
And handwrote your will and testament here on my stage  
I will not leave this place until I take this staff  
And whip you and tear your skin to shreds!

*And whip you and tear your skin to shreds!  
And whip you and tear your skin to shreds!*

### ز غلول:

يا لجنة الحكم اهتدي عا ببيري وشوف الرزق والخير عم يدري دري  
لو كون عم بحكي شي واحد همشري أو شي حدا كتير الكلام وثرثري  
أو أخوت وفاقد صوابو الجوهرى أو شي صنم واقف بمتحف سنكري  
أو أطرش وشو صار حولو ما دري أو أخرس وما بيلحم لسانو بغري  
كنت فهمت من هالغشيم البربري أكثر ما عم بفهم عليك ببيت مري  
حكيك ما بيفهم حدا ولأنو طري ولا بريد اسمك ينكتب في دفتري  
وبين الوصايا والعصا وبيع وشري لما لقيتك عالشعر عم تفتري  
تركت الوصايا وجيت افتح عنبري واكتب بايدي وصيتك عا منبري  
ومن هون مش رح روح تا خلّي العصا تلعب على جنابك تا جلدك يهتري  
تلعب على جنابك تا جلدك يهتري  
تلعب على جنابك تا جلدك يهتري



### Mousa First Closing *Qaṣīd*:

موسى: قصيد

Owf..What a crime this is, after the great Rukuz  
 For me to have to stoop so low  
 And every time the poets ask about me  
 To have to be found in the company of Zaghloul  
 Seventeen years, the fortresses of my art  
 Were studded with one victory flag after another  
 I am a mirror that exposes every flaw  
 Your faults, too, on this mirror I have exposed  
 When poetry entrusted poetry to me  
 I swore by my homeland, my God, and my heaven  
 Never to discriminate between Maronite and Sunni  
 And never to destroy a man's house without purpose  
 You come here to test me, Zaghloul  
 But your sorry state was exposed under the lens of my intellect  
 You looked so cold and frozen beside me  
 Like a shack shivering in the shadow of a building  
 I got you as a fruitless tree so you could blossom  
 I grafted onto you the apple tree of my heartfelt concern  
 But your flower's was a mother-in-law and your fruit a daughter-  
 in- law  
 Because the barrenness was in you from the start  
 I came back and flung wide for you the gate of hope  
 And I freed you from a cruel and oppressive jail  
 I gave you the first-born of my poetry for nothing in return  
 And before you blasphemed against my generous gift  
 I embraced you as my adopted son  
 And wrapped you in the blanket of my longing  
 I said maybe you will turn out as good as I hoped  
 And trade that staff for a feather and some ink

أوخ...أوخ...جنابي بعد بوروكز جنابي  
 وكلما يبسألوا الشعار عني  
 سبعت عشر سني وحصون فني  
 أنا مراية بتفضح كل اني  
 ولما الشعر ع الشعر انتمني  
 ما بخلف بين ماروني وسني  
 ويا ز غلول جابي تمتحنني  
 ظهرت بارد مسقع حد مني  
 جبنتك زيزفوني تا تجنني  
 بقي زهرك حما والتمر كنني  
 رجعت شرعتك باب التمني  
 وعطيتك بكر شعري بدون مني  
 حضنتك ابن لكن بالتبني  
 قلت بلكي بتطلع حسب ظني  
 لهيك مجال يهبط مستواي  
 كون برفقة الزغلول جايي  
 زرعه النصر راوي حد راوي  
 وفضحت عيوبكن عا هالمراي  
 حلفت بموطني بربي بسمايي  
 ولا بخرب بيت غير لأجل غايي  
 انفضح أمرك تحت مجهر ذكايي  
 سقيع الكوخ بخيال البناي  
 وطعمتك بتفاح العناي  
 لانو المحل فيك من البداي  
 وطلقتك من سجن مظلم كفاي  
 وقبلما تكفر بنعمة عطاوي  
 وعطيتك شرف اللفهة عباي  
 وتبدل هالعصا بريشة ودواي

But oh what shame! You're stuck on that same old tune  
 That staff in your hand from beginning to end  
 You have the kings of poetry singing beside you  
 And the kings of criticism staring you in the eye  
*You sure have some nerve to harp on that staff!*

يا عيب الشوم باقي بفرد رئي بعصايي من البداية للنهائي  
 ملوك الشعر حدك عم تغني وملوك النقد قدام عينك  
 وكيف لك عين تحكي بالعصايي

### Zaghloul First Closing *Qaṣīd*:

### ز غلول قصيد:

Owf..Mousa, better to abandon that silly argument of yours  
 And not suffer the calamity of its blows  
 You're better off not being raked on this rasp  
 And your lips not tasting its blood  
 You've been bobbing up and down for an hour now  
 Like a water-wheel circling round and round  
 While my thoughts were aimed at more distant realms  
 Where I can pluck each star from its sky  
 I granted a date to the daughters of poetry  
 They peeked out from hiding to see Zaghloul  
 You made yourself a king, but we all bear witness  
 To the kind of king you really are  
 If you ask to sit on poetry's throne  
 I will topple the whole kingdom on its builder  
 King Kafur was black like you  
 A slave with a fat lip hanging down and another like a lid on top  
 And when al-Mutanabbi attacked him in his poem  
 He pulled the chair out from him and his court  
 And his staff, with which your skin is familiar  
 He bought it before he bought the slave  
 I went and paid a whole lot more  
 So I could get that staff and drag you with it

أوف...أوف...يا موسى كان فلسفتك بلاها لأنك رح بتوقع في بلاها  
 يا ريتك ما عقلت بهيك مبرد ولا شربت شفافك من دماها  
 الك ساعة عم بتنزل وتصعد مثل ناعورة الضيق مداها  
 وانا عم بفتكر بمجال ابعد تا اقطف كل نجمة من سماها  
 انا عطيت لبنات الشعر موعد على الزغلول طلت من خباها  
 وبمشق القد والخد المورّد اجت عالدير تعرضلي صباها  
 عملت حالك ملك نحنا منشهد ملك على مستواك بسمتواها  
 وازا بتطلب بعرش الشعر مقعد تا هد المملكة عللي بناها  
 الملك كافور متلك كان اسود وعبد، شفة وطى وشفة غطاها  
 وعند ما هاجمو بالشعر احمد ابو الطيب، لوى الكرسي ولوها  
 وعصاتو الجلدك عليها معود قبل ما يشتري الزنجي اشتراها وانا  
 رجعت دفعت ليرات ازود تا احضى بهالعصا وجرك وراها

Stop evading the issue and acting hurt  
 Enough trying to confuse everyone, enough!  
 Even if you appeal to Jesus and Muhammad  
 I won't let go of you, I won't throw down my staff  
*Not 'til Hrajl declares a day of mourning for you*

حاج تنهَرَب وتزعَل وتحدرد  
 اذا استنجدت في عيسى ومحمد  
 كفاهها خلط عالعالَم كفاهها  
 ما رح سيبك ولا برمي العصايي  
 قبل ما تدور حراجل عزاهها

### Mousa Second Closing *Qaṣīd*:

### موسى: قصيد

Owf... There you go drawing your sword again  
 And prefacing your talk will killing  
 If that's the kind of prelude you want to dwell on  
 Why make the people suffer? Let them leave  
 I beg you, Judges, listen and make your ruling  
 Tell me what I should say to this guy  
 Shall I tell him we're hewn from the very same quarry  
 A crime not even the law can undo  
 We read a prelude in Jirdaq's book  
 The winking and backbiting over it was endless  
 It's true, and the truth stings most  
 When it is told at just the right time  
 Mr. Critic, only one poet has lifted himself  
 From the mire that drowned others in shame  
 Like you I wonder what is to stop us  
 From taking advantage of this critical realm  
 To talk of the poor and hungry people  
 Whose daily bread the rich man exploits  
 Or talk of orphans with tears in their eyes  
 Lost with no honest soul to show them the way  
 Zaghloul, break out of this prison  
 Fly high and teach your wings to soar  
 With you here is a poet of vast horizons  
 Reaching farther than the invaders of space

أوخ... وكمان السيف بعدك عم تسلو  
 اذا بدك تضلّ بهيك مطلع  
 وحديتك بالقتل عم تستهلّو  
 شو زنب الناس خليهن يفلّو  
 بريك يا حكم احكم واسمع  
 وقلي انت شو بيجوز قلّو  
 بقلو تتيننا من فرد مقلع  
 جرم والشرع مش ممكن يحلّو  
 قرينا بشبكة "الجرداق" مطلع  
 الغمز واللمز عنو ما تخلّو  
 حقيقة والحقيقة شو بتوجع  
 اذا تعبیرها كان بمحلّو  
 يا ناقد بس في شاعر ترفع  
 عن الجو الغرق غيرو بزّلو  
 وانا محتار مثلك شو بيمنع  
 مجال النقد نرجع نستحلّو  
 ونحكي عالفقير الما بيشبع  
 رغيغو والغني عم يستغلّو  
 ونحكي عاليتم العم بيدمع  
 وضاع وما التقى مخلص يدّلّو  
 يا زغلول من هالسجن اطلع  
 وطير وعلم جناحك يعلّوا  
 معك شاعر الو آفاق اوسع  
 وابعد ما غزاة الجو حلّوا

I've never let myself be afraid of death  
 No matter from where its soldiers loom  
 Because from death a man has no escape  
 No matter how many or few his years may be  
 If my bones are called back to the dust  
 I will hop on that train to eternity  
 Willingly I would die so that death can join  
 The glory of Mousa with the glory of Khalil  
 And I'll tell you what grief my death would stir  
 Not only would Hrajl cry for me and mourn

*All of Lebanon would weep and wail my death!*

أنا من الموت ما تعودت افزع جنودو منين ما طلّو يطلّوا  
 حيث الموت للانسان مرجع سنينو قد ما زادوا وقأوا  
 ان طلبتني الأرض للأرض ارجع قطار اللانهاية يستقلّو  
 وبموت بخاطري تا الموت يجمع مجد موسى ز غيب ومجد "خلّو"  
 وتا تعرف بموتي شو بتفجع بموتي بس ما بتفجع "حراجل"  
 بموتي بينفجع لبنان كلّو

### ز غلول قصيد:

### Zaghloul Second Closing Qaṣīd:

Owf...Sing, poetry, sing out my praises  
 It was my voice that taught the songbird to sing  
 The April moon would have sallow cheeks  
 If not for my poetry's henna tattoo  
 Mousa, the sword blade of your greatness has gotten quite dull  
 Be very careful before you utter a word  
 If you die I wouldn't consider that  
 A great loss to Muslims and Christians  
 And Hrajl, whose everlasting name I adore  
 And for whose people my loving heart swells  
 It said "Oh well, he died, may God never bring him back"  
 Because today he triggered his own demise  
 People like you should answer to me  
 Because as the great and famous cedars know  
 I am your father and your father's father; kiss this hand  
 And I am the father of our dear departed friend

أوف...أوف...أوف...تغنّي يا شعر فيبي تغنّي أنا البلبل سمع صوتي تا غنّي  
 وقمر نيسان كان اصفرّ حدّو لو ما بنور اشعاري تحنّي  
 يا موسى سيف عزك صام حدّو قبل ما تلفظ الكلمة تأنّي  
 انت لو متّ موتك ما بعدّو خسارة عا شعب احمد وحنّا  
 وحراجل اسمها الخالد بودّو وبحب صاحبها قلبي تهنّا  
 قالت مات الله لا يردّو لأنّو اليوم عا حالو تجنّي  
 عليّ لازم المتلك يردّو لأنّو بيعرف الارز المكّنّي  
 أنا بيّك لبّيّك بوس يدّو أنا بي اللّي قبلك غاب عنّا

And the father of all those my companions defied  
 The father of the spear and the sharp blades of swords  
 All brilliant children are children of mine  
 I am the nurturer of *zajal* who made poetry bear fruit  
 If you die and people start mourning for you  
 It's not for your sake our homeland will weep  
 It is for your father's sake that Lebanon will  
 Weep tears of blood, at home and abroad  
*Zajal* enthusiasts, reign in your thoughts  
 Compare where he was with where we are  
 Judges, get ready to make your choice  
 And give every poet what his heart desires  
 Now, facing his foe, each opponent  
 Salutes you, most cherished of us all  
 So this poetry will remain exalted on high  
 May God keep you and keep eternal

*The cedars of Lebanon and the nights of ma<sup>c</sup>anna!*

انا بي اللي رفقاتي تحدّوا      وبي الرمح وشفار الاسنة  
 وانا ولاد الزكا ولادي انعدّوا      انا مربّي الزجل تا الشعر جنى  
 وازا مت و عليك الناس حدّوا      مش كرمالك ببيكي وطننا  
 كرامة والدك لبنان بدّو      ببيكي دم عنا وغير عنا  
 يا انصار المعنى الفكر حدّو      وشوفوا وين كان ووين كنّا  
 ويا حكام للحكم استعدّوا      تا تعطوا كل شاعر ما تمّنى  
 وهلق كل ضد قبال ضدّو      ببحييكن يا ا على ناس منّا  
 وتا يبقى هالشعر مرفوع حدّو      الله يديمكن ويضلّ دايم

ارز لبنان وليالي المعنى

## APPENDIX C: Glossary

**‘*ajz*** literally the “rump”; refers to the second hemistich of a two-hemistich line

**‘*atābā*** traditional, homonym-based genre of oral poetry consisting of four-line stanzas with the last word of the first three lines being homonyms with different meanings; often paired with a ***mījanā*** choral refrain

**Beit Mery** a summer mountain resort town in Lebanon that overlooks Beirut; the location of the historic verbal duel encounter of 1971 between the *Jawqa* of Khalil Rukuz, led by Mousa Zoghayb, and the *Jawqa* of Zaghoul al-Damour, led by Joseph al-Hashem (aka Zaghoul al-Damour)

***daff*** tambourine

**al-Damour, Zaghoul** literally the “Baby Dove of Damour”; penname of *zajal* poet Joseph al-Hashem (b. 1925), leader of the *Jawqa* of Zaghoul al-Damour and known as one of the giants of Lebanese *zajal*

***dawr*** literally the “round” or “turn”; refers to the successive lines of a stanza that follow the *maṭla*<sup>c</sup>

***derbakki*** (also *darbuka*) type of hand drum with a goblet shape played under the arm or resting on the player’s leg

***Fuṣḥā*** the “eloquent” or literary form of Arabic as opposed to the various spoken dialects of Arabic; Modern Standard Arabic; Classical Arabic

**ḥafli** a party

**ḥafliṭ zajal** a *zajal* party or *zajal* performance

**iftitāḥiyyi** Arabic term for the opening segment of a verbal duel during which the lead poet of each *jawqa* sings several stanzas in the *qaṣīd* form

**jawqa** Arabic term for a team or band of oral poets, usually consisting of four poets ranked by seniority and led by the most senior poet

**kharja** literally the “exit”; the “x” rhyme at the end of the penultimate line of a stanza in *qaṣīd* form; signals the onset of the end of the stanza which is completed in the single hemistich that follows

**maʿannā** a very common long, melismatic metrical form used in oral poetry most often for more serious topics; a term that is also used by poets synonymously with *zajal* referring to sung oral poetry in general

**manbar** (also *minbar*) literally “stage” or “pulpit”

**maṭlaʿ** literally the “starting point”; the opening line of a stanza

**Mousa** see entry below: **Zoghayb, Mousa**

**mubārāt zajal** literally a *zajal* “match” or “contest”; term used to describe the large event when two *jawqas* of poets compete against each other

**nathr al-naghamāt** musical prose style of Arabic music characterized by a free rhythm and tendency towards long and frequent use of melisma, coloratura, and other forms of vocal

embellishment; in general, this style is used for conveying more serious ideas and arguments

***naẓm al-naghamāt*** ordered musical style characterized by a regularly rhythmized underlay; in general, this style is used for treating lighter topics

***owf*** an emphatic expression poets of *zajal* use at the beginnings of lines to express feelings of excitement or exasperation; can range in length with longer “*owf*” providing poets with opportunity to think out their lines, signal a change in tempo, or showcase their singing voice; sometimes pronounced “*owkh*”

***qarrūdī*** a common metrical form used in oral poetry characterized by short, rhythmic musical meter used for light topics

***qaṣīd*** poetic/musical form used in the *iftitāḥiyyi* and closing odes; belongs to the *nathr al-naghamāt* (musical prose) style of Arabic music, which is characterized by a free rhythm and a tendency towards long and frequent use of melisma, coloratura, and other forms of vocal embellishment; follows the rhyme scheme a // b a // b a // b a // ... // b x // a

***qaṣīda*** Classical Arabic ode that follows the same rhyme scheme as the *qaṣīd* form of Lebanese oral poetry

***riddādi*** Arabic term meaning “repeaters” and referring to the chorus of singers who accompany *zajal* poets and who repeat refrains throughout the performance while seated behind the poets on the stage; *riddādi* also play a variety of percussion instruments such as *derbakkis*



(drums) and *daffs* (tambourines) or other musical instruments such as electric keyboards or clarinets

***rujūʿ*** literally the “return”; refers to the final single-hemistich line of a stanza in *qaṣīd* form which exhibits a return to the original “a” rhyme

***ṣadr*** literally the “chest”; refers to the first hemistich of a two-hemistich line

***shurūqi*** a form of *zajal* of the *nathr* musical style characterized by a long melismatic ending to each line; considered one of the more difficult forms; Mousa Zoghayb is known among *zajal* poets as a master of *shurūqi*

***zajal*** a term with root meanings associated with singing which in Lebanon refers to sung vernacular oral poetry in general; the poet-singers under focus in this study who engage in Lebanese verbal dueling are referred to as *zajal* poets

**Zaghloul** see entry above: **al-Damour, Zaghloul**

**Zoghayb, Mousa** (b. 1937) lead poet of the *Jawqa* of Khalil Rukuz (at the Beit Mery verbal duel) and considered one of the greatest *zajal* poets of his generation